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A VOLUME OF VERSES,

SERIOUS, HUMOROUS, AND SATIRICAL.

BY

WILL. BUCHANAN, B.A.,

EDITOR OF THE AYR OBSERVER.

EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES.
GLASGOW: HUTCHISON CAMPBELL.
AYR: W. M. DICK, 38 SANDGATE STREET.
MDCCCLXVI.

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ERRATA

At page 3, thirteen lines from top, for *boat* read *sons*.
At page 17, three lines from top, for *men* read *man*.
At page 21, nineteen lines from top, for *years* read *your*.
At page 23, four lines from top, for *bank* read *roll*.
At page 40, thirteen lines from top, for *her* read *his*.
At page 40, thirteen lines from top, for *worms* read *worm's*.
At page 60, top line, for *breeze* read *lurch*.
At page 96, eleven lines from top, for *tame* read *the tamer*.
At page 111, top line, for *They're* read *There*.
At page 124, three lines from top, for *her* read *Her*.
At page 125, foot line, for *charm* read *wile*.

A VOLUME OF VERSES.

THE WIFE OF RABBI MEIR.

Of Woman's excellence, when asked
To state my full conviction,
My perverse Muse I've sometimes tasked
To write a pleasant fiction.
Yet fiction e'er so exquisite—
I'm far enough from pleading
The character would mine befit—
Is evanescent reading;
Nor all the fantasies put forth
By novelist or poet,
Could half so well depict her worth
As simple fact might show it;

And, if you doubt me, stay and hear
About the Wife of Rabbi Meir!

The Rabbi was a learned Scribe,
Of virtue unaffected;
Not any Elder of his tribe
Was ever so respected;
The old men rose when forth he walked,
The young men kept from pressing;
The prince was silent if he talked,
The poorest had his blessing;
No haughty condescending airs,
The paltry soul concealing;
No broad phylacteries, long prayers,
The hypocrite revealing;
So truly good and wise was he,
To seem, with him, was but to be.

To Her, an ardent Jewish maid,
His first fond troth he plighted;
Years saw the promise unbetrayed,
Their hearts but more united.
Though gone the glow of other days,
A richer light was beaming,

Like Sunset's long-drawn golden rays
O'er August's landscape streaming,
So shone with lustrous mellowing grace,
Which made the whole diviner,
The beauties of his Rachel's face—
A glory calmer, finer,
Than e'er adorned her maiden life,
Halo'd the Mother and the Wife!

No longer young—she past her prime,
Her lord was sixty turning;
Through both life's Spring and Summer-time
They'd had their share of mourning.
Of daughters seven and lovely boys
The Sepulchre had reft them—
Two boys—their last and youngest ones—
Were all that Death had left them.
Beside the grave of its first-born
Youth is a frenzied weeper;
When Age laments its latest-torn,
Its grief is sorer, deeper;
For ah! the tenderest heartstrings twine
Round Joseph and round Benjamin.

At morning meal, the Rabbi hears
Those children's music swelling;
Then to his Court he goes, nor fears,
Ere he regains his dwelling,
Another entrant at its door
His footsteps shall have planted,
And come, as he has come of yore,
Unwelcomed, and unwanted—
That hated guest! who never waits
Until that he be bidden;
Who claims the best within our gates,
Nor heeds though he be chidden:
Where least expected—there he flies;
And loves to take us by surprise!

Not far from Rabbi Meir's abode,
And all along the meadow,
A murm'ring river quietly flow'd
Through sunshine and through shadow
Not deep—a stripling's tender limb
Was strong enough to stem it;
Not dark—the silver fishes swim,
His young eyes see them gem it.

Yet, sometimes, if a thunder-shower
Among the hills at morning
Had fallen, it rushed with torrent power,
And, rising, scarce gave warning—
And then as quickly 'twould subside,
Long long before the even-tide.

Of all the witcheries that dwell
In nature's kind or coy mood,
It surely is the water's spell
Which fascinates our boyhood.
We tire betimes of field and wood,
Of valley, and of mountain;
But sea, or lake, or pouring flood,
Dark tarn, or glassy fountain,
Or streamlet—if they chance be near
The home that's ours no longer—
It weaves a charm, which every year
Binds round the heart the stronger;
For there we never tired to stray
And while the livelong summer day.

Beside that stream the children oft
Would sit for hours together;

And lave them in its water soft,
Through all the sunny weather.
The one—the elder of the two—
Was darker than his brother;
His hair was of the raven's hue,
But golden looked the other;
And his long silken auburn tress
Flowed to his round white shoulder,
His face had more of boyishness,
In spirit he was bolder—
And strangers called them, near and far,
The Evening and the Morning Star.

Their favourite spot an islet was;
To it they daily waded—
So fresh its flowers, so green its grass,
So pleasantly 'twas shaded!
There they rehearsed their simple tales,
Or guessed their boyish guesses,
Or launched the skiff with tiny sails,
Or gathered water-cresses;
Or—but 'tis needless to relate
What every spirit fancies;

Things perish of a later date,
  But these dear old romances
Of early days, they perish not,
Though all between should be forgot.

And they were busied with their game,
  As children can be busied,
When lo! a rushing sound there came
  Which older heads had dizzied;
The elder, terror-stricken, cried—
  "The water's up the valley!"
Then crept close to his brother's side,
  His gentler heart to rally.
The younger said—"The way is short—
  Before the flood can near us
We'll reach the ford—'tis but a sport—
  Why fear—there's nought to fear us!"
With that he took his brother's hand—
Alive they never reached the land.

Not far below the well-known ford,
  The servants sought and found them:
Alarm'd they ran when first they heard
  The waters rushing round them;

Yet childhood struggling for its life,
With death contends but weakly;
Indeed, you cannot call it strife,
It yields so soon, so meekly;
Fast in each other's arms they lay,
Their ringlets interweaving,
So still, and yet so smiling they,
You could not help believing
They feigned to sleep; or else you deem'd
They really slept, and, sleeping, dreamed.

Small are the griefs that toss the breast,
As winds toss up the ocean;
And blind the sight, and break the rest,
And make a wild commotion.
But a great grief, or hope, or fear,
Or hate, or love, or wonder,
It shakes the soul—as shakes the sphere
The awful stroke of thunder—
A moment; the vibration o'er,
A perfect calm possesses,
And powers, all dormant heretofore,
Awake to curse or bless us—
Angels or devils then we are,
To do, to suffer, or to dare!

The selfish nature, in such mood,
Is hardened to the stoic;
But ah, the selfless and the good
Sublimed are, and heroic.
Quiet tears may fall, as on they go
Along this vale of sadness;
And yet not wholly tears of woe,
They have a tinge of gladness.
Such tears as Christ himself once shed
Where Lazarus lay sleeping—
Even though about to wake the dead
And end the sisters' weeping—
Such tears, poor Rachel, then were thine,
At once both human and divine.

No vulgar wail of grief was hers,
No passionate despairing,
No feature of her visage stirs,
But tranquil is her bearing.
Her women wonderingly looked on,
And awe-struck stood before her,
Ne'er so majestic had she shone,
Ne'er such a light come o'er her;

And still they looked, and still they feared,
So wondrous and unhuman,
To common natures she appeared
Or more or less than woman,—
One mighty sorrow in its fall
Transfigured her, transfigures all!

Their bier she made her bridal bed,
That bed where oft had nestled
Each little sleeper's round warm head,
Unconscious how she wrestled
With God in prayer, to bless the lad,
And take him in His bosom.
Ah! sure, that prayer an answer had;
Though Flesh might pine to lose them,
Faith, piercing far beyond this scene,
To Love's great heart confining,
In regions purer, more serene,
Beheld her twin-stars shining,
And everlasting radiance pour,
Where clouds can intervene no more.

Why cowers the hen above her brood—
The fox still keeps his cover?

Why quails the throstle in the wood—
Not yet the hawk doth hover?
Why pales that wonted sunny brow
With momentary tremor?
What mars the visions bright just now
Of yonder placid dreamer?
Whence flits there through the crowded feast
That silent shadowy spectre?
Why, when we're fain to doubt the least,
Some damning dark conjecture—
Inexplicable, undefined—
Starts up to daunt and dog the mind?—

We know not. But there is a sense
The sages never mention—
A sure, instinctive prescience—
A subtle apprehension
Of evils—yet to sight unseen,
By circumstance unshapen—
A mystic sympathy between
Our thought and what's to happen!
It is not terror or disease;
It is not calculation;

Far less the vagrant reveries
Of wild imagination ;
It makes the strong and resolute
At times unsteady falter ;
The readiest tongue, the nimblest foot,
The rosiest cheek to alter ;
And most men, in reflective hour,
Own its existence, and its power.

The Rabbi had this feeling too,
He strove in vain to master—
It was not he already knew,
Or dreaded the disaster ;
Yet, all that afternoon, his breast
He felt a weight oppress it ;
The more it weighed he did his best
The more to dispossess it ;
And strangers said—"How eloquent,
How luminous, how pleasant
His words, his thoughts, his argument!"—
But still that ever-present
Seemed to the man himself to draw
A veil o'er prophets and o'er law.

Ah! could we sometimes enter in
The soul's most secret closet,
Shut out the world and all its din,
And know as God but knows it—
How often might we start to see,
Beneath the covering lifted,
Some slow-consuming misery,
Inspire the highest gifted!
Yes, yonder man of many-tongue
Who seems, and makes us joyous,
His accents are but wildly flung
To drown his own heart's noise—
To stifle what he cannot quell,
To hide what he would scorn to tell!

The Rabbi reached his home, and still
The burden was not lightened;
But, lest his wife should think him ill,
His looks the more he brightened;
He called for wine when he did sup,
And generous wine was brought him;
Rachel herself poured out the cup,
And tenderly besought him

His wearied strength to renovate
After the day's fatiguing;
It seemed, whilst they conversing sate,
As if the two were leaguing,
Each from the other to withhold
What both were burning to have told.

A man that very day had pled,
And gained his cause, as claimant,
From one who money borrowéd,
And would not make repayment:
The two before the Rabbi stood,
To hear the suit he bent him;
The debtor said, with hardihood,
The money was not lent him,
But given in gift. This was denied.
And when he asked the debtor
What proof he had, the man replied—
"No witnesses, no letter;"
Yet still more obstinately loud
He swore, protested, and avowed.

"It was such vile attempt at fraud,"
The Rabbi said commenting,

"I could have seen the wretch outlawed,
And stoned, without relenting."
And though his heart was not severe,
His feelings never hardened—
He ever sentenced with a tear,
Rejoiced whene'er he pardoned—
Remembrance of such treachery,
Ingratitude and meanness,
Shot fire into his mild blue eye,
Lent to his tongue its keenness;
With anger strange for him and heat,
He cursed the ingrate and the cheat.

Rachel from listening now arose;
The daylight fast was waning;
The Rabbi thought a night's repose
Might cure the day's complaining;
So to his chamber he withdrew—
At first a dread suspicion,
Then horror, flashed upon his view;
Now he repels the vision—
But no! Too evident, alas,
Was read the strange foreboding;

And, soon as read, at once did pass
Away that heavy loading—
Broken the spell that bound him fast,
But worse what came than what had past.

"That I should live!" the old man cried,
"Surviving babes so cherished!
Would God for them that I had died,
Or at my own birth perished!
Hopes of my heart!—props of my age!—
How vain was all my toiling
To leave you fame and heritage!
Now cruel death despoiling
My hearth of you, all else may take!—
Oh! if all else could buy them
Gladly I'd give it for their sake—
And want and scorn—defy them;
But now, what need I care or crave,
I'll go down mourning to the grave!"

Rachel awhile uttered no word,
Though silently she sorrowed;
Then said—"And is it thus, my Lord,
We pay what we have borrowed?

And may not He who lent us them
  Recall His own at pleasure!
Shall selfish men deny His claim,
  Or grudge restoréd treasure?
God of our fathers, and our own,
  Thy law is right and gracious!
Grateful we held them as a loan—
  These jewels dear and precious—
And gratefully we thank Thee for
Their uses past and—Evermore!"

The Rabbi heard, the Rabbi felt
  That higher wisdom spoken;
Then on the ground profoundly knelt,
  And thus in accents broken—
"I thank thee, God, for all Thou dost,
  Though clouds and darkness gather,
Thy way is holy, wise, and just,
  My Father! oh my Father!

I thank Thee most of all for her
  Who cures my selfish blindness,
To me the present minister,
  And token of Thy kindness!"

Then who may Woman's worth despise?
Her selfless heart—it makes her wise!

HANS HERDER'S STOCKING.

Hans Herder of Heidelberg was so well known,
To all the good Germans who dwelt by the Rhine,
If you have not ere now heard about his renown,
I am sure, gentle reader, the fault is not mine.
For never a tower, nor a turret, nor mill,
For fifty leagues round where he dwelt with his dame,
But sometime or other had needed his skill,
And proud, to this day, has carved on it his name.
Did the quaint borough clock need its dial renewed—
Did a weather-cock rust, or a copestone but lurch—
Or some lightning-rod start—had an arm to be screwed
On the old battered cross at the top of the church—
Who but Herder was called? What height was so great,
To scale it his art would not willingly dare?
Till the blouses around all so knowingly state—
Sly Hans is in league with the Power of the Air!

Hans never once tried disabusing their mind;
It made his acquaintance so wondrously civil:
For, since witchcraft's no crime, 'tis men's interest you'll find,
To appear upon very good terms with the Devil!
And such was the mark at which Herder was prized,
That nobody thought of e'er crossing his track;
So through all that wide district he monopolised
The office and fees of the sole Steeple Jack.

One day he had scrambled, by aid of his kite*—
(Hans called it his Demon to keep up the *ruse*),
To a tower of not less than some fifty yards height,
With scarce breadth on its summit for one pair of shoes.
But scarce had he seated himself on the top,
Beginning his work, when a mischievous puff

* In former times the only way of ascending spires and other elevations was to throw a rope over the summit by means of a paper kite. A string was attached to the tail of the kite. The kite was then flown right over the building, and brought down on the other side, taking the string, of course, with it. A rope was then attached to the other end of the string, and easily hauled over the summit, and fastened, and thus, a kind of ladder, very precarious, was obtained.

Of wind blew right over the fastening-rope
Of his ladder, and made him look foolish enough.
For he knew his own secret: he knew what some don't—
And the knowledge of that made him inwardly groan—
He knew if the Devil had helped him to mount,
He also would leave him to get down alone.
In vain the good burghers exhausted each shift
To fly that same kite as they'd seen Hans oft fly it;
Now—it wont rise at all and the ladder-rope lift;
Now—it lifts, but the tower it sweeps saucily by it!
All their efforts are vain—and the day it wears on:
Poor Hans still remains, like old Simon Stylites,
Aloft on his pillar, nigh turned to stone,
With hunger and cold—what a pitiful sight 'tis!

His Frau, who had been in the country all day
To visit her mother, returned rather late;
And wondered Hans had not come part of the way
As was always his wont, to escort home his mate.
For, though they'd been married for twenty long years,
Joan was as dear to his heart as of yore;
And at home, or abroad, or where'er they'd appear,
It seemed as their courting would never give o'er.

And of all the fine sights one delights to behold—
The purest and sweetest this world can give—
'Tis a couple whose love never fades or grows cold,
But who go on sweethearting as long as they live!
She reached her own house—all was silence and gloom;
The door it was fast, at the window she stood;
A moonbeam so dreamily lit up the room
In whose order and quiet there boded no good.
"Why—what can this mean? Hans has never been here!
Things are just as I left them—his table and chair—
The cloth neatly spread—and the pot for his beer—
And the loaf for his dinner—are still standing there."
And then a cold shiver through Joàn would steal;
So fearful she felt; and no wonder, I ween—
What loneliness equal to that which we feel
Where all speaks of life, yet no living thing's seen!

To town she soon sped; and quickly she heard
How her spouse had been prisoned for many an hour.
Right glad 'twas no worse, she said never a word,
Till she called up to Hans from the foot of the tower—
"The Stocking you put on this morning, I trow,
Is all of one thread, it was worked on my wire—

Unravel't, and make up a ball for your Frau,
As I've taught you to do oft o'nights by our fire—
Hold fast the one end, and then drop down the ball—
I'll catch it, and fasten a hank of thin cord,
Which will carry a rope, with your ladder and all,
And you'll come down as sweetly and safe as a bird."
So Hans he was rescued. Before all the folk
He kissed his good wife for her love and her wit;
And the blouses of Heidelberg say as they smoke—
"More uses than one in wives learning to knit!"

Of women like Joàn Heaven send us no dearth!
But prosper their art; and, oh, help them to spin,
From the web of small charities wove at the hearth,
Escapes for their husbands from sorrow and sin!
And when Pride our poor Reason would tempt to ascend
To heights whence the spirit can find no release,
May the piety twined by our firesides then lend
The thread, that guides home to faith, virtue, and peace.

ROBERT BURNS.

A CENTENARY ODE. 1859.

We hail to-day his glorious birth,
One hundred years ago,
Who taught his brothers o'er the earth
To think, to feel, to glow;
Whose independent spirit fires
In countless thousands now.
Aye, and will burn till Truth expires—
That Roman from the plough!—

Who spurned the falsehoods of pretence,
The insolence of pride,
Who measured men by worth and sense,
And not by mere outside;
Who, from the mob that worship State,
Turned to the sterling few
That honour—what alone is great—
The Good, the Just, the True!—

Who round the lot of lowly life
Has warmth and beauty flung ;
Who shared its pleasures, cares, and strife,
And as he found them sung ;
Who, in his own brief chequered course,
Proved that though Fortune's ban
Goes far—too far—it need not force
Real manhood from a Man !

Thy story, Burns, a tale unfolds
As thrilling as thy song ;
Oh! that the age which now beholds
Might hate thy crying wrong—
The cold neglect, contemptuous airs,
The cruel callous sneers
Proud Dullness towards Genius bears ;
And worse, mayhap, the tears—

The maudlin tears which only fall
As soon as men are dead,
And flow full-coursing down the pall
Of Bards who wanted bread ;
The hypocritic tears accurst,
So like their ways and doom,

Who used to kill the prophets first,
And garnished next their tomb !

Away, away, the ignoble train !
What duty have they here ?
Could ever Poet's ardent strain
Reach to their frozen ear ?
Could intellect's bright flashing beam
Their barren being start ?
Or feeling's glorious headlong stream
Run rushing through their heart ?

*

But come all men, true, human-souled,
Whatever your degree—
Men cast in honest nature's mould,
And, like that nature, free—
Whom love, and hate, and pity's yearn
Alternate sway by turns,
For ye, indeed, should crown the cairn—
The towering cairn of Burns !

He gave a voice to every mood,
A tongue to every scene ;

His scorn fell like a lashing flood,
Electric wit between;
And satire's blast, rough, roaring, loud,
Came on like driving hail;
How shrunk the shivering liars, cowed,
Behind their rotten pale!

But humble hope, and virtue pure,
And faith divinely calm,
In his affection stood secure,
And poured their holy psalm—
Alike from Loudoun's manse of love,
Or cottar's kitchen hall—
And breathed their souls to One above,
The Father of us all!

The truly reverend he revered,
Who lived, not lipped, their creed,
Who served the God they felt and feared,
By righteous word and deed;
Nor, till in Scotland's homesteads fair
Devotion's lamp grows dim,
Can die the fervour of that prayer,
The music of that hymn.

No, no, ye shallow sceptic crew,
'Tis false what bigots say;
Our poet was as far from you,
As from the night the day;
That light of his—most awful dower
To erring mortal given—
In every calmer, loftier hour,
Approved its native Heaven.

No pale phosphoric gleam, which plays
Round stale corruption, here;
No feeble taper's glimmering rays
Beside some dismal bier;
No Etna-flame, with sulph'rous breath,
Its dust and ashes showers;
No lurid levin, charged with death,
That dazzles and devours;

His genius like the sun forth shone,
To bless our human sight,
And clasp the world in one broad zone
Of bright and living light;
To banish gloom—alas that gloom
His own career should mark!

Yet, though the Sun all else illume,
The Sun itself is dark.

In Burns's lustre, oh! how sweet
The wild flowers round us spread!
The mountain-daisy at our feet
Lifts up its modest head;
The broom puts on a yellower flush
Along our banks and braes;
The heather dyes a deeper blush
As conscious of our praise.

The bird sings blyther on the tree,
Or twitters in the brake;
The bees they hum more busily,
And sweeter honey make;
While all the creatures of the hill
Forget their hiding place,
And come to lick our hand at will—
We know them by their face.

Fairies foot lighter on the lea,
And dress in gayer green;

Fate wears more pleasing mystery,
When he holds Hallowe'en;
He waves his wand—witches and ghosts
Our wizard's spell abide;
He speaks, and lo! the hellish hosts,—
And "Tam's" immortal ride!

How lovelier lovely Woman too,
In maiden charms arrayed!
So artless, innocent, and true,
Who is not captive made?
And oh, what ecstasy as both
Confess the mutual thrall,
And pass the word, and plight the troth,
Which leal hearts ne'er recall.

How softly blow those westland winds
Around the happy spot,
Where married love its dwelling finds,
Care and the world forgot;
Where peace gives joy a deeper zest
And sanctifies our lives,
And each believes his "Jean" the best
Of women and of wives.

And when the swiftly-footed Time
  Steals on us unaware,
Writes wrinkles on young Beauty's prime,
  Binds Vigour to his chair,
Age looks not crabbed or forlorn
  Although its strength be gone—
The fresh dew of a second morn
  Is round "John Anderson."

What mirth in "roaring Willie's" laugh,
  And soul in every stave!
What pith in Dr. Hornbook's staff!
  What shrewdness, gay and grave,
And fund of honest, friendly lore,
  In every friendly line
To "Davie," "Graeme," and twenty more,
  Which sages might enshrine!

His lyrics stir our British blood
  Wherever Britons toil;
They fell the far Canadian wood,
  Dig the Australian soil;
Where Northern winters hold their reign,
  And Eastern summers long,

They bind our sons in one strong chain
Of Sentiment and Song.

A soldier, once by conquest led—
So old historians write—
Slept with his Homer 'neath his head
To nerve him for the fight;
Wherever Freedom's battle's fought,
And patriots seek the fray,
They'll rouse them to that trumpet-note—
Heroic "Scots wha hae!"

Hail Scotia's Bard! Long shalt be felt
Thy lyre so many-stringed;
To soothe, to madden, or to melt,
What words like thine are winged?
One age—and do we deem it hard
That but one Burns appears?
Nay, men were blessed with such a Bard
Once in a thousand years!

For He shall live, and still live on,
When all those years are past;
While harvests wave, and rivers run;
While pangs and passions last;

He'll be, till nature's final hour
  Looks wan in nature's face,
A name, a presence, and a power,
  To move the human race.

THE GLOAMING.

The traveller, he chooses at morning to start,
The evening thinks best to come home in;
But of the whole day I prefer, for my part,
The quiet hour that brings us the Gloaming:
The calm and the beautiful Gloaming!

The poet, he raves of star-lit midnight skies,
Full moon sets his fancies a-roaming;
But in my little heaven the whole stars are two eyes,
And they shine far most bright in the Gloaming:
The calm and the beautiful Gloaming!

The toper, he sits 'mid a glare lighted up,
While the tankard before him is foaming;
But I know a still more enrapturing cup,
Which intoxicates so at the Gloaming:
The calm and the beautiful Gloaming!

'Tis when Maggy meets me in our own trysting bower,
As the bees cease their day's honey-combing,
And I sip the sweets of the loveliest flower
That ever shed charm on the Gloaming:
The calm and the beautiful Gloaming!

I wonder how lovers get on in the clime
Where night of approach gives no omen,
And day, disappearing at once, leaves no time
For the courting that's done in the Gloaming:
The calm and the beautiful Gloaming!

THE ASS AND THE MIRROR.

The Animals long had some capital play found,
In the ignorant airs and conceit of the Donkey;
Who fancied he'd got limbs as lithe as the Greyhound,
The coat of the Leopard, and wit of the Monkey.

But, tiring at last with his poor exhibitions,
They wished him at Banff with his capers so silly;
Yet the Ass could not see it; his vain repetitions
He still would inflict on them *willy* or *nilly*.

The Beasts, bored, at length a great meeting devise,
For the purpose in fine the poor Donkey to settle;
Some would crop his long ears; others shave round his eyes;
While a third would adorn his scrub tail with a kettle.

But the motherly Stork, deeming mildness the best,
Said—She thought that the Ass might reclaimed be by flattery;
For her part, soft measures were dear to her breast,
She dissented from acts of assault and of battery.

At once 'twas agreed, and her plan passed *nem. con.*,
And this was the way they proposed with the Ass—
Each a small contribution should bring of their own,
To buy for his use a full-length looking-glass.

They said on presenting't—the trick it was sly,
And worthy the Fox who composed the inscription—
"That the mirror was given"—now this was no lie—
"Because of his Donkeyship's powers of perception;"

For they thought them so weak; and were sure if he saw
What a figure he cut in his mirror at home,
With his stupid-like face, and his vacant hee-haw,
Never more he'd presume in the forest to roam!

'Twas done; but, alas, for the Stork's calculation,
Though meant in reproof, in mistake it was ta'en,
For the Ass got more foolish in each demonstration,
And with love of his figure more asinine vain!

And what do you think? as one evening they called,
Astonished they found his whole crib in a scrimmage—
In the middle the mirror, and there, unappalled,
Master Donkey was standing haranguing his image!

He balanced himself on his hind-legs and tail,
His fore-legs, extended in orator-fashion,
Were waving around like a wind-mill or flail,
And he brayed as if aping John Bright in a passion.

The Animals looked, and were satisfied sure,
That asses are asses, do all that you may;
And to show him himself, in the hope of a cure,
May make worse but won't better poor dull Neddy Bray.

THE FRAILTIES OF GENIUS.

[SUGGESTED BY A CLERICAL INVECTIVE AGAINST BURNS.]

THE flaws pass unseen in the potter's dull ware,
  Which the clear sparkling grain of the crystal discloses;
And the rust-stains escape on the coarse iron-share,
  Which the fine polished steel of the sword-blade exposes.
The weeds that grow rank in the black muddy meres,
  Have taints which their ugliness helps to conceal;
On the beautiful rose every blemish appears,
  Which the rose's own beauty but helps to reveal.

'Tis the light of the sun makes his dark spots so dark;
  'Tis the brightness of gold makes its dimness so dim;
Had the silver no sheen, could we ever remark
  The motes that across its fair surface may swim?

And so, of the foibles and frailties let's speak
Of the gifted and great ones who ranked among men;
Had their lives been less noble, their genius more weak,
Their foibles and frailties had slipped from our ken.

Say, would you prefer yon dull potsherd of clay,
To this bright flashing goblet, brimful, flowing o'er?
Though the dullness of that hides its fractures from day,
And the brightness of this makes its flaws show the more.
Would you deem the vile ore, from its dross scarcely run,
Of more price than the falchion of temper so true?
Or imagine a glow-worm worth more than the sun,
That her spots are apparent, the worms out of view?

Would you garner the weeds, and dishonour the flowers,
Because weeds pass unnoticed, while flowers are well scanned?
And take from the wreaths that encircle the hours
All the beauty and fragrance they breathe through the land?
If the sins of the Small you so often o'erlook—
And how many may not mediocrity hide?—
For the faults of the Great, oh, pray, spare your rebuke,
Or, of error, speak gently when truth's by its side!

They were men of like passions with all, we allow,
And their passions, too truly, oft led them astray;
But, tell me, how much of their frailty might flow
From their far greater powers, giving passion more sway?
If Dullness so often leaves Duty's right course—
Although its inertness scarce moves it along—
Can we wonder if Genius, with thousand-fold force,
Is driven at times into paths which are wrong?

What vexations and sorrows, which fools never know,
Are the prices the great for their wisdom pay down?
And if these overcome them, alas! till they bow,
Is it righteous to weigh them in scales with the clown?
What feelings, what griefs, disappointment and care
Has the sensitive spirit? What deep-hidden tears?
Are these naught in your balance? Oh, surely, 'tis fair,
That the Gifted be tried and condemned by their peers!

There is cant in the Church, there is cant in the State,
On the mart of Exchange, in the cobbler's stall;
But of all the vile forms of such canting I hate,
It is that which metes not candid justice to all:

Which leaves daily pigs in their filth to grow foul,
Because for their lard there's convenient need ;
And atones its neglect with an orthodox howl
At the dead, who were men, both in thought, word, and deed !

TO MR. JOHN LEECH,

[ON HIS VISIT TO AYRSHIRE IN 1858.]

Excuse me, Sir, this rhyming speech !
Your name, well known, is Mr Leech—
  A name which, on reflection,
I'm sure yourself will quite admit,
In one respect is not so fit ;
  For, under your correction,
Leeches are most unpleasant things,
Their very sight a shudder brings,
  And thoughts of deep dejection ;
The young abhor them ; and the old,
Although with feelings more controll'd,
  Don't view them with affection.

But You, permit me, Sir, to say,
Are very much the other way,

By old and young you're courted ;
And, when on *Punch's* weekly sheet,
Our boys and girls your presence greet,
No matter how exhorted—
They'll laugh and shout, aye till they cry,
And, through sheer force of sympathy,
Even Baby crows transported.

I wish you saw our merry group,
When Tom, at Aunt Jemima's hoop,
Gets to be quite satiric ;
Or Bob, the rascal, apes papa,
In some connubial fracàs,
Or "does" a state-empiric ;
Or Billy, taught by none but you,
With voice and gesture renders true,
The London street-boy's lyric.

And yet, methinks, I hear a bird
Just whisper in my ear a word,—
"Pray, wherefore all this pother
About a name ? The name is good:
Don't common leeches draw bad blood
From people ? So this other

Draws off ill-humours, cures the spleen,
And, with his pencil-punctures clean,
Makes whole at heart each brother.

We thank you, Sir, for all you've done;
For all our jolly fire-side fun,
Untiring and unending;
For deeper lessons sometimes taught:
Lessons where tender pity fraught
With harmless frolic's blending;
And hints of social sorrows too,
Sorrows that else might drop from view;
Or pass without amending.

We wish you, Sir, with all our heart,
Long days to use your happy art,
And make mankind your debtor;
An art to which Achilles' blade,
Whose touch could heal the wounds it made,
Just answers to the letter;—
The shafts of ridicule you dart,
Even when most keen is felt their smart,
Through laughter make us better.

The tears you wring are tears of mirth,
The throes we feel the pangs at birth
Of many a quaint sensation;
And, when your tyrant power you use,
To drag us wheresoe'er you choose,
In uttermost prostration,
A single straw might bind us all,
Obedient to thy humour's thrall,
Thou Hogarth of the nation!

THE UNPROTECTED FEMALES.

FYTTE YE FIRSTE.

The Misses Vinegar of Cruet Hall
Kept house—a long way off from *Union* square;
No husband's tyrant voice, no baby's squall
Disturbed the peace of the unburdened fair.

Miss Bet, Miss Poll, Miss Peggy, and Miss Sue,
The title was of each most worthy madam,
Who said—and, more than that, who *looked* it too—
She'd share the bed of ne'er a son of Adam.

In high disdain they held the giddy crowd
Of silly ones, who sigh for love's embraces;
Most copiously they censured them, but loud
These sisters were in celibacy's praises.

"See to that chit," Bet says, "that flutters so
When Mr Thing-a-bob pays her attention;

I do declare *I* would not have a beau,
To make me blush and simper, for a pension !"

"Poor Widow Spry !" the pitying Poll would add,
"I wonder what with her young child she'll do ?
Better she ne'er had seen that foolish lad,
Who died and left her scarcely worth a *sou !*"

Peggy, with pursed-up mouth, takes up the tale :—
"The widow, truly—well—it makes one tingle
To see how briskly some folks take the veil !
It won't be her fault if she long is single.

I'm sure, last Sabbath, 'twas so very clear,
Her cap was set at Mr Such-a-one ;
Dear me ! how soon they do forget 'a dear,'
And through their weeds blink like an April sun !

Yet, after all, 'tis not so very strange ;
What can folks look for ? 'Married love,' indeed !
Well, it seems all the better for a change !
And change is lightsome—that's your widow's creed !"

And thus the maidens sat, and talked, and sewed ;
And comforted each other with the thought,
Though to be wed for them an easy road,
They'd wisely chosen a much happier lot.

Yet, keeping health and spirits up, fresh labours
You'll find will very much assist you in;
And so these ladies in their friends' and neighbours'
Affairs took interest truly Christian.

"Who worshipped with the Crabs last Sunday week?
Is't true he and Louisa are engaged?
He'll not, poor man, *his* sorrows have to seek—
The Crabs have fearful tempers when enraged!

"The Partans lease the house of Seafieldgate,
'Tis quite a wreck indeed, but, then, they're poor;
His wife and Oyster are to separate;
He's given to *lick-'er*, and she drinks galore.

"The Salmons soon must *fail*, I've heard it said;
(That they were e'er at *parr* some folks deny;)
The Trouts are in deep waters overhead;
And Martha Flounder is in such a fry!

"Tom Tit's young child, 'tis thought, will never talk;
That comes of cousins marrying, I declare!
D'ye hear, Ned Sparrow is to wed Nell Hawk?—
They'll make, indeed, a very pretty pair!

"The pride of these Goldfinches, whose papa
Once kept a garden, makes one cough, eh—Sirs!
And I much fear that giddy girl Macaw
Is too familiar with the officers!"

And thus, from house to house and day to day,
Each "free" and fair Athenian goes and clatters;
For recreation hears what people say,
And helps to tear a character to tatters.

And then, at home, they chew the cud again;
That is, when they have no domestic jars;
But *jars* the house must have, which can contain
So many aromatic Vinegars!

FYTTE YE SECONDE.

Sally, their housemaid for a while had been,
Fee'd with "no followers"—as you may suppose—
Only a "brother" sometimes might be seen—
But this, remember, is "beneath the rose."

Sally, in fact, was young ; and rather fond
Of being smart, and looked at by young fellows ;
Her caps were done with ribbons, even blonde,
Which sometimes made her "neighbour" rather jealous.

And when on Sundays she went out to kirk,
So neat the gum-flowers looked inside her bonnet,
So fresh her colour, too, I'm told a clerk,
O'er head and ears, had written her a sonnet.

But he and she cast-out sometime ago ;
Indeed, she was a rather fickle thing ;
Most are content with two strings to their bow,
Sall always wanted two beaux to her string.

How one like her in Cruet Hall should be,
To some may seem a circumstance quite odd.
Not so at all. For, don't you clearly see,
Sall was at home a kind of lightning-rod ?—

So that, whene'er a Vinegar was itching
To use her tongue—which, it is no conjecture,
Was twice a day—she, going to the kitchen,
Discharged a most electrifying lecture :

Dress—looks—youth—work—and messages—and men—
The gamut was of each most tuneless spinnet;
This when exhausted she found peace; and then
Sall sang *piano* blythe as any linnet.

For she was clever, plausible, and glib,
And knew the weak points of each mistress well;
A bit of scandal, news, sometimes a fib,
And, oftener still, a well put tale could tell.

Once she had ta'en a rather devious way
To market—what the cause was must be guess'd—
And stay'd her message—why, I do not say—
The least that's said is sometimes thought the best.

But, coming home, it struck her to contrive
A history to screen her malversation;
And so, with breathless haste, she brought the hive
To earnest, deep, excited consultation.

"Oh mems," said Sall, "just guess what's happened now!
The houses far and near is being plundered—
A gang of villains is abroad, I trow,
And murders being gone and done a hunderd!

"Last night old Hunks's was most broke into—
The night before Miss Cochin's hens was took—
The thieves got into neighbour Lucre's flue,
And could not get no farther, for they stuck!

"Oh mems! its awful times—I tremble for
Lone women like ourselves, and unprotected—
I'm sure they'll kill us—cut our throats—oh lor'—
And maybe sell our bones to be dissected!"

Now, as they were tall skeletons, these sisters
Dissection doctors ne'er would need to try on;
And, though a doctor, with his pills and blisters,
May make a skeleton, you'll catch him buy one.

But artful Sally, often metaphorical
When driven to shifts for hoaxing each grim scold,
Had thrown this in just for effect rhetorical;
Yet, sure enough, it was *the* shot which told.

FYTTE YE LASTE.

To think their lovely bones should meet such end—
Be handled, looked at with profanity!
Why, the bare thought was quite enough to send
Those maidens of strong mind into insanity!

It did not make the sisters four look blue,
For that they always did—it made them bluer;
And Sall, who thought she'd hit the proper cue,
Said it thrice o'er, as if nought could be truer.

For she'd a notion that the ladies might
Desire her to bring up her "brother" quick
To guard the Cruet premises all night,
Sitting *down stairs* with blunderbuss or stick.

For once the maids were speechlessly dumbfoundered—
As if they saw the robbers come, they shook;
Then in each other's faces looked and pondered—
At length Miss Sue, the youngest, speech uptook.

"Indeed, indeed, the times are very awful
For unprotected females like us four—
Garrotting, murder, everything unlawful
Done in broad day-light, and at night much more.

"Those who have husbands may, in such a hurry,
Find themselves better off than those who want;
It is some recompense for all their worry—
A man's of moderate use at times, I grant.

"But that aside: You know I disapprove
Of ladies having servant-men in livery;
And wonder that that silly thing Miss Groove
Is not ashamed; but then she's lost to every

"Sense of propriety. I'm sure I've hoped,
That it may not some day come to be known,
That with her footman she has just eloped—
Such things have been!—Still—Cruet Hall's *so* lone"—

("Alas, alas," sighed each responsive dame—
A-*lad*—a-*lad*—inconstant Sall surmis'd,
Who hoped a coming footman, and fresh "flame,"
And, in her mind, a deep man-trap devised)—

"So very lone, and we are so unfit
To guard ourselves that something we must do;
Upon a plan most excellent I've hit,
When we have gone upstairs I'll tell it you."

Necessity, the proverb says, you know,
Proves man's and woman's best and wisest ally;
And in this case it showed itself just so—
Though not to please the amorous housemaid Sally.

The Misses Vinegar fixed on a plan
To scare intending robbers—a device
Which was no foolish virgin's weak trepan,
But a wise plot, and innocent as wise.

For, lo, each bought a Hat—a human Hat—
A Hat such as the rougher species uses—
And these upon the lobby pegs they squat
In Cruet Hall—oh happiest of ruses!

That, when the robbers come, they'd see the beavers,
And straightway for their lives run fast and far,
Dreading four foemen in the fair deceivers,
Who, if not up to love, proved up to war!

Each Miss Minerva went to bed that night,
Confirmed in courage, resolute, sedate,
No other *arms* to shield her from affright,
Strong in her helmet, bought for Six-and-Eight!

A VISION OF LIFE.*

I TELL it as 'twas told to me,
  Although not told in rhyme,
By a weather-beaten Sailor,
  Who had voyaged many a time
To India from Scotland,
  And from India back again,
And had faced, in all their thousand shapes,
  The dangers of the main.

Hard-featured was that Sailor,
  His hands with toil were tann'd,
And stout at heart as any Tar
  That ever left the land;
Gruff was his speech in common:
  He was—you might have said—
Take him for all, of toughest teak
  Of which a Salt is made.

* The Author had the substance of this Poem told him, as a personal experience, from the lips of a Sailor, several years ago.

And yet, as he related this,
In simple words and slow,
His voice was like a woman's whiles,
So musical and low;
And o'er his roughened features
A strange tenderness was thrown,
Whilst his horny palm seem'd sensitive,
And pulsed with every tone.

Strange power of soul! to make men look
At times so different—
Dilate the form, or shrivel it,
According to its bent—
As it glows with lofty feelings,
Or gloats on low desires;
Expands with glorious passions,
Or in abjectness expires.

We were doubling the Cape—
It blew a stiffish breeze,
The word was "shorten sail"—
I had mounted the cross-trees,

When a sudden breeze to leeward
Pitched me over in the sea;
I sank, and, ere I rose, the ship
Was far a-head of me.

She was bowling at the rate
Of some seven good knots or more;
But in life-or-death I tell you, Sir,
One knot counts for a score,
And every second for an hour,
An hour, Sir, by the glass—
An hour! Nay, one such second's
An eternity to pass!

The ship it seemed to lessen,
And the distance seemed to grow;
And the boiling sea it tossed me
Like a feather to and fro;
And, strong swimmer though I was,
Hope might well give up the strife;
But a man ne'er thinks of hope or fear
When swimming for his life.

Once only I remember,
When uplifted on a wave,
I thought I saw, far, far away,
A boat launched out to save ;
That was the latest earthly thing
That flashed across my brain ;
And then the rush of waters,
And I sank and sank again !

But next I saw a something, Sir,
Far clearer even than thought ;
No words could ever tell to you
How clearly it was brought ;
Far clearer than the fire that burns
Within the chimney there ;
Or even than I see you now,
When sitting in that chair !

I've often dreamed of Mother,
And of home, when on the deep ;
Beheld old scenes and faces,
And have hailed them in my sleep ;

So natural and living-wise
The fancies all did seem;
Yet this something, Sir, was quite unlike
The seeing in a dream!

I cannot, Sir, explain it;
But I only know that then—
In these few struggling moments—
As if written with a pen,
The story of my life was traced,
And I could read it through;
And all the letters were so large,
And all the words so true!

No scene through which I e'er had passed—
The good as well's the bad—
No friendship that I ever made,
Or hatred that I had;
No love, no joy, no fear, no grief,
Possession, or desire,
But was set forth upon that scroll
In characters of fire!

As on a chart, at one swift glance
I could entirely scan
The track I'd travelled o'er life's sea,
From baby-hood to man ;
All that I ever said or thought,
Or did, or left undone—
The best and worst, and all between,
Were gathered into one !

And then each letter turned a face—
The face of one I knew
In years long lost, long lost to me,
But now restored to view;
And, oh, what thousand memories stood
Disclosed in every look,
As, one by one, each visage gazed
At me, from out that Book !

Some had a recognising smile,
And some an earnest air ;
Some looked a speaking pity,
And some a dumb despair ;

Some gave a stern, upbraiding glance,
And some a withering frown—
But, turn me where I might, that crowd
Of faces still looked down!

Those shapes I knew: old buried thoughts
Sprung into life once more;
The ghosts of years departed all,
The years of youth and yore;
And, oh, if they can haunt one thus,
And blast him with their spell,
I wonder people ever doubt
The horrors of a hell!

One sad, sweet face—I see it yet,
Though faint, Sir, very faint
Compared with then—it bent on me
The sorrow of a saint:
Oh, Christ! I'd given the universe
To turn away my sight;
But, no; I could not shun its gaze,
And far less quench its light.

I once refused a beggar alms
When I had coin in purse—
His wan and wasted features there
Grinned at me with a curse;
An orphan child I might have saved
From cruelty and wrong,
But did not, and with piteous eyes
It smote me from that throng!

I saw the loving ones I'd grieved;
I saw them one and all;
What meaning, as each saddened glance,
So gently they let fall!
The mother that had nursed me,
And the sister of my youth,
The truest friend I ever had—
Type of all manly truth.

How long the vision lasted
'Twas impossible to gauge;
It may have been an instant,
But it might have been an age;

All sense of time was baffled,
And lost in that amaze,
As there they stood, confronting me,
With solemn, steadfast gaze.

I only know, when next I woke
To sense and time, I lay
Weak, weak, and weary in my cot;
And still my messmates say
That for long hours 'twas doubtful,
When they plucked me from the wave,
If they would not have to cast me back
Into the Sailor's grave.

He ceased. The quiver on his lip
Told eloquently true,
That the Sailor was but speaking
Of what he felt and knew;
And, sure, if life be wonderful,
More wonderful is death,
To make us live life o'er again,
As we resign our breath.

We carry, each within his breast,
The judgment yet to come ;
And one day, self-convicted,
May like him be smitten dumb.
The sharpest axe to torture us
'Tis our own hand that helves ;
Heaven spare us such a punishment,
And save us from—OURSELVES !

TIT FOR TAT.

Tom slapped his neighbour in the face,
And thus, with metaphysic grace,
He begged to be forgiven—
"Don't now be angry at the blow,
For it, like all things else, you know,
Was fore-ordained by Heaven!"

His neighbour, seeming satisfied,
With coolness thus to Tom replied,
Although his cheek did burn—
"'Tis very true what you aver;
As Heaven ordained, my witty Sir,
I kick you in return!"

TIME'S MEASURES.

Reckon not by Sand or Dial,
Or the Clock's dull passing sound;
Life disowns such computation,
Time consists not in their round;
Sun and Moon may keep their courses
With unvarying length of years,
And the Seasons dance their cycle
To the music of the spheres;
Not by such material measures
Is our being counted o'er;
Youth is sometimes old at twenty,
And Age youthful at fourscore!

Present pain, it clogs the minutes,
How unwelcomely they stay!
Pain in prospect lends them swiftness,
Rapidly they pass away;

Promised Hopes, expected Pleasures,
Loitering, laggard is their pace;
While our fevered pulses thunder,
Like the chariot in the race;
Like the courser, who, the nearer
To his gaol, the faster flies;
And, like him, as worn and jaded,
Ere we win, and wear the prize.

Worn and jaded, with the sickness
Of Desire so long delayed,
Pleasure palls us with its sweetness,
Hope possessed is hope decayed;
Sated, not with satisfaction,
Sinks the soul in torpor numb,
Every nerve and power grow feeble,
Feeling, Fancy, all are dumb;
Then, indeed, poor senseless Matter
Well enough existence tells;
Minutes are but sixty seconds,
Hours are counted on the bells.

Oh! for something less deceiving,
More ennobling and sublime,

Which shall set our bosoms beating
To a grander march of Time;
Rouse our souls to earnest striving,
Stir our hearts to ceaseless play,
And shall make us, while we're living
In To-Morrow, live To-Day;
Something whose majestic Future,
Unconceived, unheard, unsung,
Fresh before us ever rising,
Keeps the spirit ever young!

Young, for eager aspiration;
Young, for generous lofty aim;
Young, with thrilling thought and effort;
Young, with feeling's warmest flame;
Old, in all the unbought wisdom
Sagest counsel can impart;
Old, in all the wary caution
And experience of the heart.
Such a Youth and Age uniting,
Meeting thus in holy strife—
This, Immortals, is the only
Fitting gauge of Mortal life!

Reckon not by Sand or Dial,
Or the Clock's dull passing sound;
Life disowns such computation,
Time consists not in their round;
Sun and Moon may keep their courses
With unvarying length of years,
And the Seasons dance their cycle
To the music of the spheres;
Not by such material measures
Is our being counted o'er;
Youth is sometimes old at twenty,
And Age youthful at fourscore!

THE SWALLOW.

Ha ! thou'rt welcome, little comer,
From far lands beyond the sea ;
Shaking from thy wings the summer,
Raining sunshine on the lea ;
Fluttering, twittering, round my dwelling,
Swimming, skimming through the air,
In swift lines, now sinking, swelling,
Here and there, and everywhere.

Cynics call thee, feathered chatterer,
But a false fair-weather friend,
Leaving, like the human flatterer,
When the heat and splendour end ;
Leaving when the cold and freezing
Months of dreary winter come ;
Leaving for a land more pleasing,
And a warmer Southern home.

'Tis not so, my blythesome neighbour,
Building there beneath the eaves,
Ceaseless at thy grateful labour;
When the fickle Summer leaves,
Thou dost follow to decoy it
From its haunts across the main,
And, that we once more enjoy it,
Bring'st it back to us again.

And thou bid'st the Robin cheer us,
As thy proxy, when away;
And the Blackbird to be near us,
Through the dull and wintry day;
And the Mavis from the thicket
Cometh too, at thy behest,
Tapping gently at our wicket,
A confiding Christmas guest.

All unlike the saucy Starling,
Thou no measured distance keep'st;
But, as some familiar darling,
Sly into my study peep'st,

Chasing gloomy thoughts when rising;
Papers, books, I cast aside,
Thou so coaxingly art wising
To enjoy the bright noon-tide.

Winter nights may do for moping
Over ills we must endure;
Lamps be good enough for groping
Through old musty tomes obscure;
But, with thee and sunshine wooing
To the gay and open fields,
Who could bear such task pursuing,
Who would prize the gain it yields?

Deeper than the lore of sages,
Wiser than the gloomiest look,
May be gathered from the pages
Of great Nature's glowing book;
So, I thank thee, friendly Swallow,
For thy hint so kindly sped,
And, with thee, I'll quickly follow,
Where the golden volume's spread.

ON THE FAMILY REGISTER IN AN OLD FAMILY BIBLE.

Thou unpretending chronicle! brief record of the past—
Of hopes born to be blighted, and of joys that could not last!
Like shadows chasing each across some calm and inland sea,
Thy tranquil page it mirrors well how swift life's stages flee;
It shows how mourning follows mirth, how gladness turns to grief,
The Bridal, Birth, and Burial stand so closely on thy leaf.

No inspiration penned thy lines, yet all those lines are true—
True as the sacred Book, of which thou seem'st a portion too;
Oh, happy thought! which thus in one so fitly interweaves,
Whate'er ancestral pity felt, and piety believes;

For here is sorrow, comfort there—the wound, the cure beside—
The trouble of afflicted hearts, and Refuge where to hide!

'Tis thus, in lone and lovely spots, where trees tower to the sky,
And cast their shadows o'er the ground where dust and ashes lie,
To church the churchyard points the way, and in its solemn air
The worshipper is fitted best for penitence and prayer—
Mortality conducts to God, immortal hopes are fed,
The house for living men is next the house of all the dead!

I love thee well, thou little scroll! though, like the prophet's one,
Within, without, thou'rt written full of weeping and of moan;
Like it, too, thou art sweet to taste, if sorrowful to see,
For Fancy, Faith, and Hope descry the angel's hand on thee,
So sweet and sacred is the calm suffusing all my breast,
As piously I read the names of friends long gone to rest.

Yes! blessed is the communing we hold with parted friends,
Mysteriously merciful the rapture which it lends;
It stills our passing angers, it dries our passing tears,
It dissipates our foolish hopes, dispels our foolish fears,
It girds us to the battle, and it nerves us for the blow,
And it gives us strength to master all the meaner things below.

I'll treasure thee, thou little scroll! And whensoe'er this heart,
Too keen, too kindly, or too cold, forgets its proper part,
Acutely feels an injury, unwittingly offends,
Yet proudly scouts forgiveness, and as proudly scorns amends,
I'll take thee down to learn thy lore, and in that lore descry—
These lived, these loved, these hated once,—they died; I have to die.

SCOTTISH BALLADS.

Oh! we remember well the dear-loved times,
When life and thought as yet to us were young,
With what delight we listened to the rhymes,
Which fall but from a Scottish mother's tongue;
The sweetly simple Ballad, said or sung,
Of love-lorn maid, or warrior clad in steel,
Of bloody men and dark forbidding crimes,
Of high-souled honour, and heroic zeal,
Resolved, in life or death, Truth never to conceal.

And how we fondly wished ourselves were men,
That we might right the wrongs our fellows bore;
How gladly should we aid all sufferers then!
Joy with the joyful, with the sad deplore,
The long-lost lover to his bride restore,

The evil from their ways of guilt allure
To Virtue's happy path of peace; and when—
But why regret the ills we cannot cure?
Ours was the good at least to feel intention pure.

Greece had a Homer; Virgil tuned in Rome,
For royal ears, his chaste and classic lyre;
Shakspere hath writ for ages all to come;
He "looked through Nature with creative fire."
Great are the feelings which the Great inspire,
Green be the laurels that to them belong;
And yet, as high the thoughts in happy home,
That thrilled through all our little listening throng,
Woke by the winged words of simple Scottish song!

My native Scotland! In thy halls are heard
No more the lays that oft have echoed there;
The mirth, the music, and the feast seem marred;
Still in those halls are lords and ladies fair,
And looks as blythe, and hearts as free of care:
Still is the board as hospitably spread;
But one alone is wanting—Where's the Bard?
Is it the Muses from thy shores have fled?
Is it that, with thy power, thy Poesy is dead?

Thy Bardic race has long since passed away,
Each sleeps in silence by his own green hill;
Forgot his name, but not forgot his lay.
Ah, no! Its accents yet have power to thrill.
And if, when all things else are strangely still,
Some stray-notes fall upon the vacant ear,
Soft as the breeze on Summer's listless spray,
We think of whom we now no more can hear;
And, for that memory, bless the Minstrel with a tear.

His are the strains with beauty ever new—
The oftener listened to the more they please;
To home, to feeling, and to Nature true.
Orpheus might lead the all-obedient trees—
So was it fabled—but these melodies,
Where'er I wander, or where'er I stand,
What'e'er I think upon, what'e'er I view,
Arrest me like some strong, though unseen, hand,
And bind my soul to thee, our old historic land!

THE DEAD CHILD.*

I MIND it well as yesterday—
  Though years have come and gone a score—
Upon my bed one night I lay,
  And, troubled, tossed me o'er and o'er;
No sleep would settle on my eye,
  No peace possess my throbbing breast:
It was not sickness made me wake,
  Nor even sorrow caused unrest.

But, in the next adjoining room,
  A tiny corpse lay dressed in white—
An infant's corpse—a little clay!
  I knew it; yet, in Reason's spite,

* It may be necessary to explain that this incident happened to the Author when a very young man, living in lodgings, during his attendance at College.

Around that object all my thoughts
And wildering fancies constant clung,
Until I could have cried aloud,
But shame denied me tears or tongue.

The Mother, with her watchings worn,
Had long since sobbed herself to sleep;
The Father, with his toil o'ercome,
What time had he to wake and weep?
The Children scarcely knew their loss,
Or, knowing, had forgot it too;
A stranger underneath that roof,
I only woke that whole night through.

No sound stole through that silent house,
Yet, to the inner, active ear,
Even Silence seemed itself to speak
In deep, suppressed whispers near.
No movement at that mid-night hour,
And yet the eye, acutely keen,
Saw shapes and shadows in the dark,
And muffled images between.

The sounds no human note conveyed,
Of wailing grief, or sigh, or moan;
The shapes were what no limners trace,
No earthly form did they put on.
Nor were they of that mingled brood,
Begot, as Sadducees might deem,
In realms they never yet defined,
Of a delirium and a dream.

Yet, whence they came, and wherefore sent,
And whither tending, well I knew;
And, led by them, at last I rose,
And from the bier the cover drew.
The solemn hour—the solitude—
The corpse—the silence—and the gloom—
I've been at deaths and graves since then;
I never was as near the tomb!

The scanty grey of earliest dawn,
Gathered upon the snowy sheet,
The swathings round the little head
A halo formed, faint but complete.

And, oh, what sculptor ever caught
The still, entrancing, matchless grace
Which those young features carried there!
I bent me low—I kissed the face.

With reverent care I then replaced
The cover, but no tear I wept;
Then backward to my room I passed,
And laid me down, and soundly slept;
And, to this hour, when others speak
Of death with shrinking and dismay,
My memory straightway summons up
That Baby's bier, at break of day.

THE ART OF MODERN POETRY.

How now, my Geron! Wherefore thus deplore
The former times, that can return no more?
Why say that genuine Poesy is fled,
Apollo dumb, and all the Muses dead?
Apollo dumb! Nay, man, he cries aloud,
And never had so large a listening crowd.
Nor feeble lute, nor lyre, he now employs;
His godship has outgrown such childish toys;
And, unconfined to rural dale or hill
He through the city wanders at sweet will.
For trumpery go-cart, drawn by trumpery team,
He mounts a 'bus, or drives high-pressure steam;
And for Æolian breathings faintly borne,
He shrieks a whistle, or he sounds a horn.

The Muses dead! Sure, years have made thee blind,
Or shattered all thy faculties of mind:
The Muses live! Not barren virgins shy,
But, fruitful now, they swiftly multiply;

Nor long gestation-months a birth precede,
As with your bantling of the human breed;
A day at most is all these ladies care,
The ensigns of fecundity to wear.
A family likeness runs through each one's race;
No single feature, but a power of face
Marking the daughters, from their dams received,
Like advertisements that must be believed.

We moderns count Apollos by the score,
And for nine Muses number hundreds more;
What time you try to pass along the street,
You cannot fail a deity to meet;
Some pale avatar, with impassioned woes,
Which mortal language struggles to disclose.
One has such *insight* he can clearly view
A very miller's stone quite through and through;
And would most surely tell you all he sees,
If Nothing could be told out in degrees.
This has a *mission*—where he cannot tell,
Because his wayward fate is not to spell.
That has a *purpose*—what he never knew,
And, till he knows, of course he can't tell you.

A fourth, who darkling *destiny* provokes
With compound epithets so nearly chokes,
That sympathizing friends grieve for the lad,
Thinking his case is, like his English, bad.
Then, all are certainly by heaven *inspired*,
And with such *earnestness* of spirit fired,
We can afford with Prophets to dispense,
And vote Apostles want uncommon sense;
Or, pitying, say—"Poor simple men, and good,
"They would have held a candle, if they could?"

Hail, teeming soul of this our nineteenth age!
Who may impugn thy fierce poetic rage?
Who may gainsay thy lofty claims, or dare
To question mortal right to mouth and stare?
Let those who will prefer the elder days,
When bards said simple things in simple ways,
And, following nature, were content with truth,
Whether of love they sang, or hate, or ruth.
Far higher praises, surely, must be thine,
To spurn the probable in every line,
To leave poor tame reality afar,
And with dull reason wage eternal war;

To agonize in rhapsodies unknown
To men or angels, since they are thine own ;
To spout and rage, to mutter and to melt,
With passions ne'er conceived, and pangs ne'er felt.

Who cares to hear that rivers sea-ward run,
Or seasons wait obedient on the Sun?
That trees expand their summits to the sky,
And flowers put forth their blossoms in July?
We know all that, and we can see it too ;
Pray, give us what's original and new—
Something will both astonish and delight,
And cause a strong sensation when you write.
Do, let your roses bloom amidst the snow,
And all your trees with tops inverted grow ;
Your seasons rule the sun, not bide his will ;
Your rivers rush with head-long force uphill !
Thus have I seen, 'mong urchins at their play,
Him bear the palm of cleverness away,
Who, nimbly throwing both his heels on high,
Stands on his head—a youthful prodigy !
What loud applauses the deft tumbler greet,
What comrades envy his most dexterous feat !

He gets besides (what ordinary mates,
Who still old fashion-wise keep up their pates,
Can never get) perspectives of the town
Both rare and strange, by turning upside down!

Who cares to know that men fair women woo?—
Our grandfathers did that, and fathers too—
That human passions warm to flesh and blood,
And feelings fall to ebb, or rise in flood,
Just as repelled by hateful objects near,
Or drawn by pleasant ones, to virtue dear?
Who cares to mark in novel, poem, play,
What one beholds enacted every day—
Sorrows that grieve, and joys that make us glad,
The peace of good men, and the pain of bad?
Such home-spun articles do well enough
For brains that can afford no costlier stuff!
Our authors now despise the plain-clad band,
And walk abroad in vestures rich and grand,
To paint a character they know so well
That has no type in earth, or heaven, or hell;
Defying rules, which guide the sluggish pen,
With strokes astonishing to gods and men;

Creating other worlds of show and sound
That far surpass our planet's humble round;
Where vast ideas with ideas rove,
Hopes against hope, and loves in spite of love;
And high abstractions with abstractions strive,
Super-superb, super-superlative.

We wish a hero of a novel cast,
Who shall out-do all heroes of the past;
Make speeches of not less than ten-horse power,
And speak a hundred of them in an hour.
Remember, he must be 'anointed priest,'
And wear a 'star-gemmed coronal' at least;
'Soul-phrensied' always too, and 'ocean-full';
'God-conquered,' 'fate-o'ermastered'—that's the school
No common fetters should his spirit bind,
But 'adamantine,' 'giant-forged'—so mind!
No vulgar feelings play within his heart,
'Tis set for all 'humanity' apart;
And even humanity is far too small
To fill its greatness—depth, and breadth, and all!
How could a soul, so universal, deign
Its 'god-like' instincts feebly to restrain?

And narrow, to one earthly friend, or so?—
The very thought were blasphemously low!
Our hero is by loftier cares possessed,
'All Being groans'—for that he tears his breast;
Then 'mighty utterances' fall on his ear—
At these he glows, and wipes away a tear.
He plumbs the 'inscrutable' on every side,
Storms the 'inevitable' with lordly pride,
Apostrophizes the 'impossible'
In words of every form of vocable;
Outruns the double-fast extravagant
At speed which makes one's human bellows pant;
And, gathering up his power for a great cry,
Dies as he lived—one vast soliloquy!

Begone, ye stupid oracles that speak
In rusty Latin and forgotten Greek—
Who say Time, Place, and Circumstance control
The glorious strains of each poetic soul.
Time, Place, and Circumstance! Pray, what are these
But creatures we create just as we please?
How very wise! To be in subject thrall
To what we make, unmake, command, recall!

Authors who write for all time—on their sheet
Surely all ages should together meet!
The Past, the Present, and the Future there
Bide the diviner, and his skill declare.
And, thus, the more anachronisms appear,
They all the more approve the master-seer.
Had purblind Homer known what we know now,
Think you he'd not have mentioned the steam-plough?
And made Achilles drive with faster speed
On locomotive than behind a steed?
And can we not anticipate in thought
What after years no doubt will witness wrought?
When men shall on electric currents flash,
And through mid ether unconcerned dash?
Why not then all those wondrous things relate
As if they were of yesterday's short date?
Hence, times and epochs only hold in string .
Your elder bards of poor and feeble wing;
Our eagle poets burst the silly bond
And soar away into the grand profound,
Whence, looking back from their far-distant height,
They see Past, Present, Future—all unite.
Virgil could make his heroes prophesy
All the events of by-gone history;

Greater than Virgil are our poets seen ;
They treat us to such things as ne'er have been !
Your savage warriors of the Middle Age
Act, speak, and reason like a modern sage ;
No—I beg pardon—that were quite a myth—
I merely meant, they dramatize like ———

For Place : why is this world made to go round
If not that no fixed place on it be found?
Seize any point of sky which you think fit,
Each spot on earth sure each day passes it.
How can you then suppose it very wrong
That to all spots like temperatures belong?
Things equal to the same, old Euclid swore,
Equal each other, neither less nor more ;
Wherefore, 'tis plain, our bards are not in fault,
When they from north to south, and backward, vault ;
To polar realms our British flowers transplant,
And teach our birds in orange groves to chant ;
Our common oaks to Labrador assign,
And gather gooseberries along the Line ;
Give Iceland maids bare bosoms as they walk,
And Afric belles resp'rators as they talk;

Or make their beaux tremendous passions froth
From under vests of West of England cloth.
Oh happy license, freed from latitudes,
What lessons teaching in thy grander moods!
Showing how art is Nature but improved,
And decked with marvels 'bove itself removed!
Our modern poet—no poor ancient dunce—
In mighty thought can bridge the world at once;
With sweet confusion gather all its spoils
Into one heap; till, resting from his toils,
Acclaiming thousands crown the bard who sings
The un-understandable of men and things!

Then, as for Circumstance—that is set loose
From absurd precedents of hurtful use.
If you have Fancy, why, then, so have I—
Must yours be always right and mine awry?
Things are to every one just what they seem,
And in my own way I may treat my theme.
If at a wedding feast my hero weeps,
He knows the reason, and the secret keeps;
If at a fun'ral he is blythe and gay,
He's the best judge, whatever critics say.

On Circumstance how vain to dogmatize!
With no two things the same in shape or size,
Or taste, or colour, aptitude, or end,
How can you urge this alter, that amend?
Or how pretend the poet is not wise
Who fills his page with most varieties?
The more the better, since the chance is vast
He'll hit some lucky accident at last.
Or if he do not, still no harm is done;
You've had a hundred images where one
Had scarce been ventured in tame verse
Such as my Geron and his friends rehearse.

Thus, modern muses, whom no trammels hold,
Pursue their way original and bold;
Rising to realms, unclogged by time or space,
Each has a world she makes, each world a race;
No worn-out laws reach to the far-off sphere,
'Tis 'sovereign genius' only it will hear;
No poor weak sympathies earth-born and slow,
Its transcendental denizens can know;
Nor hopes, nor yearnings, of a human source,
Nor fears, nor faith, repentance, or remorse—

Such as well up at times within us all—
Their lips rotund can ever once let fall.
In grand enigma, clad from heel to head,
We hear them speak, and wonder—what they said!
Wonder, my Geron, even of olden time,
Is called the truest test of the sublime.
You shake your head! Well, then, I shan't insist;
I grant scarecrows loom largest through a mist;
And ragged thoughts, just like those ragged birds,
Show greatest covered with a cloud of words!

THE BELLE AND THE BUTTERFLY.

A Belle with a butterfly held a dispute
As to whose was the finer attire;
And when she could not the poor insect refute,
It presently kindled her ire:
"Vain creature," she said, "how darest thou prate,
Who but yesterday wert a vile worm?
Yet, no wonder thou'rt proud on comparing thy late
With thy present and newly-got form!"
The insect replied—"What you state, Ma'm, is true,
I once was a worm, but 'tis past;
The same can't be said, my fine lady, for you,
Who wilt turn to ten thousand at last!"

FAMILY WORSHIP.

[WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF FAMILY PRAYERS.]

THE noblest Temple men can build,
The holiest Altar mortals rear,
The sweetest censer ever filled,
Are represented here!

In vain the swelling dome so proud,
In vain the gorgeous ritual show,
And incense rising cloud on cloud,
Unless the bosom glow!

Mercy, and Faith, and Love disown
The hollow pomp, the studied art;
The God we worship makes His throne
Within the simple heart!

'Mid kindly thoughts, and tender ties,
And pure affections warm and true,
And all home's nameless charities,
His worship best we do.

Oh formalist, with wearying round
Of useless service, fain to please,
Come, and I'll show thee hallowed ground—
Yon Child upon his knees!

Oh pharisee, of haughty brow,
And scornful eye, and stately prayer,
Tread soft, speak low, and learn to bow,
For Piety is there!

Oh hypocrite, who long hast brought
Vain offerings to an empty shrine,
Approach and listen, and be taught
What is alone Divine!

Oh sophist, who so often try'st
From every better mood to shrink,
Was ever argument devis'd
Like that to make thee think?

The best by far of all the creeds,
It dreams no doubt, and never can;
The Infant greybeard Wisdom leads,
The Babe confutes the man!

Oh reprobate, the sight may well
  Awaken salutary pain,
Stir thoughts thou can'st not kill or quell,
    And whisper Good again—

From eyes that seldom weep may cause
  The hot but blessed tears, as thou
Remember'st all thy Mother was,
    And all thyself art now!

Dear holy shade! Thy presence yet,
  Like some lone star when all is dark,
Seems o'er my rugged course to flit,
    And light my storm-sted bark!

Surely thine angel-form will stay
  Till night and darkness are no more,
To point thy erring child the way,
    As thou didst point of yore!

Praise simply tuned, however faint,
  Prayer breathed around the old roof-tree—
Such Sanctuary makes a saint,
    Such Saint a sanctuary!

THE SHIP: AN OCTOBER MUSING.

In one of those sweet serious days of October,
When Nature looks pensive for Autumn's decay;
When the woods are all clad in their russet so sober,
The skies are all hung in their mantle of grey;
When the quiet-dropping leaves one by one are descending,
And the streams scarcely murmur while floating along;
When the thrush and the blackbird their music are blending
In cadence subdued from their loud summer song.—

In that audible hush—so instinct with emotion
To hearts sympathetic—I wandered from care,
Where the Doon's tranquil waters unite with the ocean,
And the shore gently winds to the Headlands of Ayr.
Dark Greenan,* like some faithful sentinel, grimly
On the bay a look-out from his watch-turret kept,
And Arran afar, looming grandly and dimly
Through his curtain of cloud, seemed a giant that slept.

* An old ruined Castle at the head of the bay of Ayr.

On the wide-stretching waters, the lazy mists trailing
Had wreathed into volume, huge, massive, and dark,
And up to the barrier slow, stately, was sailing,
Its canvas all spreading, a gaily trimmed Bark.
I watched it a moment: The faint sunbeams, streaming
Through a cleft of the sky, had embraced it in light,
And its white wings extended, were glistening and gleaming;
But it entered the cloud, and was lost to my sight.

"Thus fail us," methought, "highest hopes, richly freighted
With all of which poor Human Nature is proud!
For they sparkle a time like that phantom ship, fated
To sink and be swallowed at last in a cloud.
What eyes have not gazed on this hoary old ruin,
Or looked in deep wonder at Goatfell's vast dome!
What hearts not been raptured as, walking and wooing,
Love hath oft by this pathway delighted to roam!

"The stones of that Castle have heard many a story;
The heights of yon Hill many a change have withstood;
But, alas, for the Noble, his pomp and his glory,
Or the Sage that hath meted the earth with his rood!—

Where are they? And what of them now can we cherish?
Ah, nothing! Lost—gone—as we all soon shall be;
For, like shadows we come, and like shadows we perish,
And the rede of our life is yon Ship on the sea?"

Nay, nay, drooping Fancy! Such bodings so dreary
Are painful to keep, nor all just do they rise;
For life, be it ever so treacherous and weary,
Has something still lasting, and lofty, and wise.
Yon ship, that you saw disappear in the distance,
But clove on its way, and is cleaving it now,
Through the thin fleecy vapours that offered resistance
Yet stayed not its going, nor cumbered its prow.

To our seeming the shadows have closed in around it,
And swallowed it up amid darkness and night;
But they cannot delay it; they leave as they found it,
Unchanged in its course, and unchecked in its might.
As it voyages onward the shadows will sever;
So, the brave one in heart who is bent to fulfil
Life's duty, finds yielding to manly endeavour
The doubts which beset the less resolute will.

Yon Ship is not lost! With its cargo, uncounted,
Of wealth and of hopes, it careers o'er the seas,
On the billows that lave other shores it has mounted,
Brighter skies kiss its pennant that floats to the breeze.
And thus—though in gloom and in death disappearing,
They who watch our departure are smitten with grief;
To the Limitless Land the Immortal is steering,
Taking all that endures, leaving all that is brief.

Oh affluent spirit of Man! 'Tis thy being
Gives life to the landscape, and soul to the grove;
From thee stocks and stones borrow hearing and seeing,
Speak in tones of despondence, or accents of love.
And can they survive thee? No! Goatfell shall shiver,
His thickly-ribbed rocks back to nothing return;
But thou shalt endure—a creation for ever—
To know and to feel, to rejoice or to mourn!

PATERNAL ADVICES.

You're young, my son, and want a beard,
I'm auld, and fain wud see you leared
In prudent counsels ; don't be scared
Though they're a wee thing rotten ;

For, let me tell you, Johnnie lad,
It had been better for your dad,
If he, when young, like counsels had
Frae sage Experience gotten.

He'd been a richer man the noo,
And many a kick, and pang, and grue,
And many a wrinkle on his broo
He'd missed in consequence.

Sae, listen, and ne'er fash your head
Wi' foolish gomerils that mislead,
And fine high-flying notions breed ;
I'll teach you common sense.

First, then, and foremost, you maun mind,
Ne'er hate owre much, nor be owre kind,
And, though you see, let on you're blind,
Sae paukily concealing.

Your foe may turn the morn your frien',
Your frien' the warst foe e'er was seen,
Just ye steer cautiously between
The cauld and het o' feeling.

No that when friens appear in luck
Ye need be wanting spunk and pluck,
Close by their elbow stievely stuck,
And ready wi' assistance;

But if their fortune tak' the dòrt—
What sense that twa should suffer for't?—
Syne, when ye meet, just look athort,
And keep a proper distance.

The strongest side, if no aye best,
Is aye the safest ane at least;
Nay, maun on guid foundation rest,
Or else it would be weaker;

Then stan' ye firmly by that side
As lang as it is strong and staid;
But, oh, be sure an tak a stride,
If it should get a shaker.

I dinna mean that ye should tak
Even a frien's quarrel on your back,
Although he may be worth a plack,
And at the time sair riven;

Folk that are ready in that way,
Aye get the warst skelps in the fray,
And maistly maun the piper pay
In grudges ne'er forgiven.

If fallows curse him to your teeth,
E'en let them, John; words are but breath,
What for should ye come by a skaith
His vain defences drawing?

But ye can tell him, when alane,
How scarce your wrath you could contain
Frae breaking the chiel's rumple bane,
To hear your frien's misca'ing.

I've ne'er seen muckle thanks returned
To them whose friendship ardent burned ;
But I hae seen them kicked and spurned
Awa wi' the occasion.

John, Gratitude's a treacherous dame,
For gifts received her memory's lame,
She's only in a loweing flame
For gifts in expectation.

In speech, if ye should say a word
Abune your breath that can be heard,
For gudesake, John, be on your guard,
And saftly, saftly latch it.

Haud aff, haud aff frae cracking jokes,
Men ne'er forgie satiric strokes,
It's no what's said sae much provokes
As just they canna match it.

Commend me to your douce dull loon
Wi' nae mad nonsense in his croon,
Wha snuves alang baith up and down,
And is na gien to daffing.

Hech, he's the model man for you ;
Whaur ithers stick he'll warstle through ;
Naebody needs to fear his mou,
And random fits of laughing.

Oh Wit, what are ye but a mar,
That's bred us many an angry jar,
And made our sorrows ten times waur,
And a' advancement hinners !

They that hae made their fortunes should
Indulge at times thy frisky mood,
And utter *mots*—that's if they could—
But no puir sarkless sinners.

Johnny, beware o' an opinion ;
Its unco easy whiles to fin' ane,
But, man, it's desperate apt to sting ane,
Unless ye catch it canny.

Listen to what your neighbours think,
And wi' the lave be sure to clink ;
Frae singularity aye shrink,
And ne'er say 'No' to any.

They're men set up to form our views
Upon the Bible or the News ;
Then let them work their wark, and use
The fruit o' their inventions ;

Its dounricht pride and vain conceit
To try such orators to beat ;
'Twill kennel mony a fashious heat,
And hell o' guid intentions :

I've kenned a chiel lose half his trade
By baking heresy in bread ;
Or base black Toryism, instead
O' sound and Popular notions.

And what's the worth o't ? I will vouch
'Twill ne'er put siller in your pouch ;
He's a wise man that whiles can crouch ;
Avoid such vain commotions.

Truth and the State will last a wee
Without the help o' you or me ;
Ye canna weel afford to be
A sodger for nae payment.

Conscience is far owre precious gear
For every day and man to wear;
Just put it by; its costs sae dear:
Folks envy the fine raiment.

Think lang, my son, before you marry;
Young husbands maistly aye miscarry;
And dinna tak a lass will harry,
But ane will hoard up rather.

Nae braw young gilpy, spruce and gleg,
Wi' glancing een and weel-turned leg:
What's beauty John?—no worth a feg;
Nor handsome ancles either.

That sort will spen' mair than she earns,
And put her foot through your concerns;
Or droun you wi' a lash o' bairns,
Whose vera keep an' cleeding

Would tak a ransom o' theirsels;
Besides, schule wage expenses swells,
Pianos, and sic bagatelles
That gang to gentle breeding.

Na, Na ; tak' ane o' mair discretion,
Whase years will limit procreation—
A woman o' gear, age, and station—
Nae hizzie in her teenies,

Wi' a' her tocher in fine dresses ;
She may hae winsome, warm caresses ;
Be bonny, blythe, and guid ; but, bless us,
Her charms will no coin guineas !

Beauty's a frail and fading flower,
A lean and insufficient dower ;
The roses that deck Cupid's bower
Their thorns we eanna know aye ;

And if the winter-blast o' want
Should mak' their leaves and blossoms scant,
We'd rather hae some other plant,
Though, aiblins, no sae showy.

Flowers mak' an unca bare house-theek,
They fen us frae nae storms sae bleak,
Nor 'gainst the weet our rigging steek ;
Plain strae is far mair eozie.

Sae, John, may prudence aye protect ye,
And no let smittal Beauty wreck ye,
But keep ye frae ilk thochtless geckie,
Wi' cheeks however rosy.

Nae doubt, by following my advising,
You'll lack much that the heart relies on—
Truth, friendship, love, fun, and the rising
O' thochts that stir the breast.

There's no a gain but has a loss,
There's no a life but has some cross,
We maun tak' matters in the gross,
And strike the balance best.

This warld is a' a mixty maxty;
But, John, its wealth ye aye may rax tae,
And, when you've reached the age o' saxty
Ye'll no like me be bent;

Ye'll hae guid braidcloth if nae brain;
Ye'll ne'er thole looks o' caul disdain;
Wha kens, ye'll ride your coach, and gain
A seat in Parliament!

The road may lie through dub and dirt,
Yet, what o' that?—ilk splash and squirt
Frae your four wheels will ithers blurt—
Ye're snug inside, my bairn.

Wealth hides a multitude o' sin,
It covers many a scurvy skin,
And puts a bonny gloss abune
The bald and empty pow;

But Poortith leaves folk unco bare;
It shows their faults, and whiles far mair,
And plays the deil wi' parts and lear,
Unless they cringe and bow.

John, mind my words, no my example;
I canna on auld habits trample,
But I can screed you aff a sample
O' what it's wise to learn.

It's what I ne'er could mak' my rule;
I was but gowkish at that schule;
A flighty, independent fule,
Aye chasing some new raptur';

And noo it's second nature, hinnie;
I canna change my way, nor winna;
I'll kick the mean and cuff the ninny
Till *finis* ends the chapter.

PAST AND PRESENT.

I.

In the childhood I remember, now some forty years ago,
The tales we heard were Fairy tales; how pleasant was
their flow,
As the kind old faithful foster-nurse—peace to her, simple
soul!—
To quiet her noisy auditors rehearsed her well-known rôle;
How Jack had mounted the Bean Stalk, the Giant grim
had slain,
And how his Mother wondered when the boy came back
again;
The sights by sailor Sinbad seen within the magic cave;
And how Men lived up in the moon, and Mermaids 'neath
the wave!
Or, if it chanced her auditors were in a different mood,
How touchingly she told us of the two Babes in the Wood,

And how the Robin happed them in their lone and leafy bower—
My heart warms to the Robin yet, and has warmed since that hour!
The Bells that rung out fortune to the little Whittington,
There's music in their memory—I'm not ashamed to own
The charm, whene'er my ear drinks in some distant tinkling chimes,
They seem the happy echoes of those old and happy times!
How cheery were the songs she sung, and never tired to sing;
The ballads, too, now softly sweet, now weirdly wild their ring,
Now gentle as a breathing lute, now like the tempest's race—
Fair Helen of Kirkconnell Lee, or Cheviot's bloody Chase!
And as our group responsive felt the savage or the sad,
Were vexed with tender pity, or anon with laughter glad,
How carefully she watched each turn, improved it as she might,
To make us bolder for the weak, and braver for the right!
Dear Betty, I recall you still, though humble was your lot,
Such home-spun honest worth as thine can never be forgot.

If whiles you scolded us yourself, none else at least dare try,
Not father, mother, granny, aunt, if you were standing by.
No hireling monthly hack, dear Bet, of this "progressive" age,
Yours was the service of the heart, not task-work for a wage.
But then your "house" was made a home, nor was there known at all
So wonderful a distance from the kitchen to the hall!
Is it I'm growing critical because I'm growing gray,
Yet nursery tales like these, methinks, have all but passed away;
And childish fancy now-a-days is not so bold and free,
Nor fed upon the simple lore it once was wont to be.
Perhaps there's something better now—the folks think so, at least,
And stronger meat they all uphold a fitter childish feast.
So be it. Still, I'll keep my creed, and say there may be worse
To warm the heart of Childhood than those fables of the nurse.

II.

In the shiny summer Saturdays, when we were boys at school,
Noon found us nesting in the woods, or angling in the pool;
And then the evening twilights, with their shadows lengthening down,
Assembled us for sport in lanes of the dear native town.
No strict preceptor's frown to fear with the to-morrow's sun,
For tasks neglected over night, and 'Bland' and 'Mair' undone;
To-morrow is the Sabbath, so, our satchels on the peg,
We'll have it out to-night till ten at 'Corby', or the 'Gegg'!
No niceness in our company, no modish pride was there;
Each boy his neighbour's equal, if he choose the game to share;
The piecer from the mill hard by, the drawboy from the loom,
And the laddie from the ropery—all welcomely had room!

Cloth-jacket chummed with Corduroy, and loved him dearly too;
And whatsoe'er the one proposed the other one would do;
So clear the shouts rang up the street, and fast and far the run,
While quaint weavers, in red night-caps, looked intently at the fun!
No stiff policeman meddled us, he rather liked the sport,
As out and in, and up and down, we threaded every court;
If, unawares, we overset a candy-woman's stall,
For reasons of her own she said but little of the fall;
Even servant-lasses seemed to like their errand very well,
If whiles we raised a knocker, or whiles we tugged a bell:
And called out 'mischiefs' after us as fast away we fled,
Or turning round we laughed outright to see them shake their head!
It may be that I'm getting blind as age comes creeping on;
And yet it seems such olden sports have out of fashion gone;
At least as they were played in years of unforgotten joys,
When every town could count by troops its happy, thoughtless boys.
I miss them in the summer eves, the lanes seem still to me,
Deserted like, and very changed from what they used to be.

I miss the girls, too, on the paves, with skipping rope and ball,
A-chanting the 'mintanzie,' or a-hopping at 'pal-lal.'
Perhaps there's merriment as blythe and hearty as was then;
Yet, somehow, bairns now seem to start from babies into men;
So trim their dress, so tight their drill, their looks so very wise,
We call them boys, and think them so, from nothing but their size.
If this be right, then I am wrong; I like the good old way,
When boys were boys, and dearly loved a rough and roaring play;
Got into scrapes, got out again; and knew no deeper shame
Than to have Tell-tale, Liar, Cheat, or Coward to their name!

III.

In the hearty, happy gatherings at homes—ah, roofless
now!—
Care did not brood so heavily on each assembled brow;
The Old were pleasant in their ways, and ready with their
jest,
And had a kindly word to speak with every younger guest;
And, when the lively reel struck up, you might have seen
Threescore
Select his partner, choose his set, and foot it on the floor
As lightsomely as e'er he did when dancing days were new;
And, after, when the song went round, he sang his ditty
too!
Beside a presence hoar with years, yet still at heart so
green,
'Twas vain to put on prudish airs when one was but eigh-
teen;
So, speed the dance, and quicker let inspiring music fly
Till wearied maidens for respite imploringly shall cry!
Then, change the venue for a time, and take a breathing
space,
And, if we can, let's quietly slip into some cornered place,

Where, safe from the too prying eyes of jealous rivals near,
We'll steal a rapture from her lips, or pour one in her ear!
I miss these genial hale old men! the race seems all but dead,
Who slipped the 'fairing' in the hand, or kindly stroked the head.
We never felt them a restraint at feast, or fête, or dance,
But gathered gladness from their voice, and pleasure from their glance.
The Old are now so hard, and dull, and sour, and callous grown,
They cannot bear a youngster's glee, but freeze it with a frown;
So changed in all from those who shared our mirth one scarce can grieve
That Hallowe'en is seldom kept, and jolly New-Year's Eve!
And neighbours then were neighbourly, they shrank from being shy;
At kirk or market never thought to pass each other by,
Nor measure out cold stately bows by some capricious scale,
But jauntily and brotherly they bade each other hail.

Now they may live for years at hand, and scarce exchange
a word;
Perhaps you're sick in the next street—ah, well, they
never heard;
Your child is dead—they recollect a hearse was at the
door;
Your daughter married—on their word, they never knew
before!
Well, well, the mode is altered now, the manners more
demure;
But, then, at least, you must admit the manners are so
pure;
The frankness of the by-gone time is now quite laid aside,
But 'tis because we're more refined—that cannot be denied;
Age has grown graver with its years, youth more correct
behaves;
Before Propriety alone we bow as willing slaves!
Who would the olden coarseness change for good so pass-
ing fair,
Or wish Society to loss such a becoming air!
Oh, Sophistry, what power is thine, to cheat plain honest
sense;
Thou slimy Tempter, as of yore, thy charm lies in Pretence;

Is Vice less vicious that 'tis hid beneath thy snakish hood?—
Makes man so oft but hypocrite, and woman but a prude?
Thinks ill where nothing ill was thought, sin where no sin was done,
And to dissemble the first law of life beneath yon sun?
Are Honour, Virtue, Truth to-day more safe, or oftener shown,
Than in the years when people wore no colours but their own?
Let bankrupt lists, and swindling schemes, and crimes might sicken hell,
Of these enlightened days of ours the bitter story tell!
Let wise young men, who will not wed, at least till years are gone,
Their fortunes made, position gained, and all their wild oats sown;
Let rifled rose-buds cast away by thousands every year—
Truth must speak out—it speaks, alas, in bitter accents here!—
Palled appetites, and hardened hearts, what matter if you make
Yon old man wretched in his age, who was in youth a Rake?

CLOUD AND SUNSHINE.

THERE be times when the soul is struck dumb with a sorrow,
When seeing we see not, nor hearing we hear;
When the heart from emotion no language can borrow,
No sign for its burden, no sigh, and no tear;
When the whispers of friendship fall on us unheeding,
And affectionate soothings prove empty and vain;
When Religion's still voice, though importunate pleading,
Nor adds to, nor lessens, nor alters our pain.

It is not Despair paralyses our vision,
Nor cold unbelieving that stifles the heart;
Nor Fear, nor Remorse, marks that wondrous condition,
We know and we feel, but can never impart.
Misfortune has thrown not its ruin around us,
And Death in our dwelling no ravage has made;
The day, as it passes, but leaves as it found us,
The night closes in with its quietness and shade.

There be times when our being, absorbed, is confounded
With a joy that ne'er yet found its utterance in speech;
Whose depths no philosophy ever hath sounded,
No sages recorded, no numbers can reach.
Care may crush with its load on the poor sinking Reason,
Till Hope shall expire in the strife with Dismay;
But the harpies of hell, though abroad in that season,
Pollute not our banquet, and snatch not their prey.

The more that they struggle, the deeper our spirit
Knows a rapturous bliss it can never unfold;
The treasure we have—although, whence we inherit,
Or why we enjoy it—a secret untold.
Ask the cloud why it nurses the sheen of the lightning,
Beside which the sun like a taper burns pale,
Which flies far and flashes, still brightening and brightening,
The denser the gloom and the louder the gale.

Ask the sunbeam itself, why, alike all untainted,
In palace and prison it carelessly gleams:—
Then ask—Why such moods of the mind I have painted
Remain all unchanged 'mid this world and its dreams?

Oh, our life is a trance; we're both sleeping and waking,
And the Mortal within us responds to this earth,
But the Immortal also its vigil is keeping,
And such moods are the throbs of its grief and its mirth!

BOTH SIDES.

THERE's sly, demure, and godly Will,
Sings psalms and prays all Sunday;
With unction he robs Simon's till,
And cheats him on the Monday.
But frank, blaspheming, rakish Bob,
's a fish of different water,
He scorns alike to pray or rob,
Yet ruins Simon's daughter!

Which is the worse? Aye, there's the pose!
I'm sure, were I the father
Of that poor outcast girl, I'd choose
That Will should cheat me rather.
He mocks his Maker to His face,
With pious profanation,
Still—all his whining and grimace
But works Will's own damnation.

Yet, ah, what wicked whine was his,
What hollow vows he tendered,
What Judas-leer lurked in his kiss,
To whom the maid surrendered!
He damns himself; he damns her too;
And that's a double damning,
Compared with which even Will should stew
For only half a shamming.

Ye Wits, who handled have so long
The pious counterfeiting;
Come, take a fresh theme for your song—
Un-pious ways of cheating!
The foul sin of Hypocrisy
You've treated right; begin
And, doubly foul, let all men see
The hypocrisy of Sin!

THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

The Queen of the South, led by Solomon's fame,
To his court for instruction in wisdom once came,
And therein, no doubt, she did rightly;
But Sheba, it seems, like a few of her sex,
Had a mischievous humour to tease and perplex,
If she thought she could do it politely.
"Now maidens," said she, "go and fetch me a wreath
Of the loveliest flowers the wide Heaven beneath,
The freshest and fairest in blooming;
And of flowers artificial a like one I'll trim,
Their forms as complete, nor their colours more dim,
All the same, to the very perfuming;
And so, it shall be, that this wisest of kings,
Who of every fair plant from earth's bosom that springs
Hath duly the properties meted,
When asked to declare which is Nature's, which mine,
May perchance be deceived, or, if he decline
To give judgment, for once own defeated!"

'Twas done as 'twas said; and Queen Sheba drew near
Where the King on his throne and the courtiers all were;
A wreath in each hand she extended,
And the question proposed; all the court looked demure;
But spoke not; because they were not very sure
If the King would be pleased or offended.
In the silence it chanced that a bee should be heard
A-hum at the window, its entrance debarred,
As if praying permission to enter;
The King in a trice bade a page to undo
The casement, and straightway the humble bee flew
Of that circle right into the centre.
By the one of those nosegays it carelessly passed,
But, faithful to nature, it settled as fast
On its twin as a miser on money;
The King, with a look half of jest, half of state,
Said—"Colours, forms, perfumes, we imitate,
But the test of a flower is the honey."

If this tale will instruct certain maidens I know,
To look more to real virtues and less to mere show,
'Twill be useful, I'm sure 'tis conceded;

And if matrons upon their young ladies impress,
That besides pretty looks, pretty manners, and dress,
In a Woman one quality's needed;
That quality Nature, not Art, can supply,
'Tis a charm beside which not another can vie,
Whilst without it all else lose their sweetness;
Bright and pure, it must spring from the depths of the soul,
To complete, to cement, and give worth to the whole,
'Tis that grace of all graces, called—Sweetness!

HAVELOCK.

TO A YOUNG SOLDIER, GOING TO INDIA, WITH A COPY OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF SIR HENRY HAVELOCK.

History no finer wreath could ever twine
Around a name, than, Havelock, around thine!
A lofty life by no dishonour stained—
Duty to man, and faith in God maintained—
And at the last a death serenely grand
As Victory smiled upon thy Spartan Band!
Who would not envy such a twin-renown?—
The Hero's laurel, and the Martyr's crown—
Virtue and Valour through a long career—
Long be his memory to our army dear!
Long may his course our British youth inspire
To blend with hallowed fervour martial fire—
To tread the steps of one whose eagle sight
Ne'er quailed in danger, and ne'er cowered in fight,
But shrank alone from vice and sin away,
And quivered only as it closed to pray!
For such a guerdon, friend, how well to try—
Live like a Saint, and like a Soldier die!

THE YEOMEN AND THE PEER.

ON THE VISIT OF THE EGLINTON TENANTRY TO THE LORD-LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND IN 1858.

Hail to the Land where social ties
Are firm and fitly bound;
Where small and great thus fraternize,
And pass the welcome round.
No servile shame, no haughty pride,
No sullen looks are here,
But friend to friend, and side by side,
The yeomen greet the Peer!

We know of climes beyond the seas
Where endless summer reigns;
Where luscious fruitage loads the trees,
And gorgeous are the plains;

Where Nature yields spontaneous store,
And rivers run with gold;
But there the men are men no more,
They're bartered, bought, and sold!

We know of regions pictured too,
On which the sun ne'er shone,
Where all is beautiful and true,
And Want and Wealth unknown;
Where Rank and Titles there are not,
None poor, none richer seem;
For all enjoy an equal lot—
Mere phantom of a dream!

But give us Scotland's sterner strand,
And Scotland's sturdy race,
We'll envy not the fairer land,
Where Freedom has no place;
And give us Nobles such as rules
Where Garnock's* tide flows near,
We'll let the visionary fools
Their fine Utopias rear.

* The Garnock rises in Kilbirnie parish, and, passing through Eglinton grounds, joins the Water of Irvine a little below the Castle.

Told forth shall be the glorious Past,
While Story has a tongue,
When clansmen, faithful to the last,
Around their chieftains clung;
And they who knew not how to yield,
To falter, change, or fly,
On many a grand old battle-field
Could bravely know to die!

Yet, better guerdon waits the age,
And prouder it shall show,
When clansmen and their chiefs engage
To fight another foe;
When ignorance and sloth are slain,
And tyrant triumphs cease;
Bright be their names who so maintain
The holier wars of peace!

And fair indeed His fame appears,
And loved our Lord may be,
Who, high 'mid Scotland's noble feres,
Yet meekly "bears the gree";

Were he who sang "a man's a man"
Alive in bonny Ayr,
He'd twine the name of Eglinton
With good Glencairn and Daer!

Long may Montgomerie live and blest,
A grateful people prays;
And may that island of the West,
Where regal power he sways,
See all his patriot wishes crowned!
Her long, long spell is broke;
The fairest tree on Irish ground
Has proved a Scottish oak!*

* No government ever exceeded in popularity Lord Eglinton's administration of Irish affairs on the two occasions on which he held the Lord-Lieutenancy (in 1852 and 1858); and none ever equalled it in the substantial blessings it conferred on that interesting country. His lamented death in 1861 was a source of unfeigned regret to the whole United Kingdom.

GENERAL NEILL.

LINES ON THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEILL MONUMENT AT AYR, 11TH OCTOBER, 1859.

Well done, brave Neill! heroic heart,
And foremost of the few,
Who fought, and—"second glorious part"!—
Who died, as soldiers do!

When Treason, Rapine, Murder, rose
For fierce and fiendish fray,
On every side ten thousand foes,
On every face dismay—
Unawed, we see thy noble form
In calm commanding might,
Emerge a giant from the storm,
A lion for the fight!
Till cheeks that blanch'd with fear before,
And hearts that quail'd grew bold,

And hands that never weapon bore
Grasp'd sword and shield, as told
How one grand Briton stood his ground,
And scorned all flight and fears,
How Courage had with triumph crowned
Neill and his Fusiliers!

Long, long shall British mothers wail
That sad disastrous time,
And maidens sicken at the tale
Of Cawnpore's hellish crime;
Yet, long as Memory holds her seat,
And History her pen,
They'll tell of Lucknow's wondrous feat,
And all our mighty men;
And, while we grieve as grieve we must,
A rapture still shall steal,
To think our country owns the dust
Of Havelock and of Neill!

Brave Neill, well done! We thank to-day
The Art that gives anew,
To all but life in proud array,
Thy dauntless breast and true;

The stalwart form—the look of fire—
The self-reliant mien—
All that our fancy can inspire
With what the Brave has been!
And here—upon this storied spot,
To Home and Freedom dear,
Where Bruce once rul'd and Wallace fought—
His Monument we rear,
Whose martial spirit, nursed upon
Their grand old deeds of war,
Grew and blazed forth, until it shone
A fit companion-star!

HERE NEILL was BORN! His life, his death
If you would learn, then go,
Go Scotsman, and with panting breath,
Behold it writ—LUCKNOW!

QUIETUDE.

When Story paints the ancient king
Retiring to his distant cave,
That he might thence sage counsels bring,
The gifts his guardian goddess gave,—
Deem not that ancient faith so blind;
All have, like him, in secret sought
Some sweet Egeria of the mind,
And like him found the BETTER THOUGHT.

The BETTER THOUGHT! What human breast
Hath never known its soothing power,
Welcomed its sacred Sabbath-rest,
And blessed the spot, and blessed the hour?
'Mid mountain-heights and solitudes,
By lonely stream and ruin hoar,
We all have had our holier moods,
And every soul hath learned to soar.

These BETTER THOUGHTS they speak a speech
Unused in languages of men;
And truer, deeper wisdom teach
Than falls from tongue, or flows from pen.
Like rays of light, which ne'er assume
Gross form, or dull material guise,
Unclothed in words they best illume—
Bright emanations of the skies!

Yes, if throughout the realms of earth,
So beauteous wheresoe'er our flight,
We trace the uses, hail the birth
Of silent, pure, and quickening Light.
Doubt we that for far nobler ends
Etherial moods in men are wrought?
Or question that from Heaven descends,
In tranquil hours each BETTER THOUGHT?

Were every ill around me spread,
And I had all to bear alone,
In desert wild to make my bed,
Nought for my pillow but a stone—

Yet, visited by such a guest,
Even in a dream did it appear,
I should but deem my lot too blest,
And say—an angel has been here!

And might there not, and shall there not,
Be still this boon for me and all?
However abject and forgot,
Or high our state, or low our fall?
Oh, yes! And who shall dare to weigh
The influence which its sacred claim
Shall carry to his dying day,
Even on the child of sin and shame?

The throb of fear, the strange remorse,
That shoot athwart the guilty brain,
May make their victim only worse,
Or stun him back to good again;
Whiche'er it be, full well I know,
Could but his deepest depth be sought,
Heaving and struggling up, 'twould show
Some old, though buried, BETTER THOUGHT.

Then let us live in humble hope,
And honour, of all human kind!
The Pharisee and Misanthrope
Alike presumptuous are, and blind.
The Great, the Good, the Last, the First,
For erring Man the blessing bought—
He'll one day ask both best and worst,
How each improved his BETTER THOUGHT.

THE GRAND PIANO.

A PARABLE FOR THOSE WHO CAN INTERPRET IT.

[SUGGESTED ON LEARNING THAT A CERTAIN PRESBYTERIAN KIRK HAD BOUGHT A HARMONIUM.]

Air—"The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow."

THERE was a douce man, Johnny *Blue** to his name,
And a ae storey hoosie he rented it;
The biggin was hamely, yet aye it was hame,
And Johnny was unco contented wi't.
His Molly and he years thegither had gane,
Ilka year seeing added anither braw wean,
And they leeved unco couthie, although they leev'd plain,
Sae his wedding he never repented it.

* *Blue* is the colour of the Presbyterian, and *Moll* stands for a certain *Kirk of St. Mary's*, whose whereabouts shall be nameless—*Madam Bishop* is the Episcopal Church, with its many *stairs* or grades of office, surplice, organ, ritual, &c., &c.—and *Leddy Scarlet* is the Romish with *ditto*.

For lang and awhile in his first married days
Moll was thochtfu', and furthy, and thrifty in't;
At makking and mending, and *turning* the *claes*,
Oh her fingers but they were sae shifty in't!
For she shued and she shued, and she span and she span;
To cleed the bit bairns, and snod the gudeman,
Her needle and wheel gaed, till neebors began
To say—"Sic a wedlock, nae tifty in't!"

And aye while she laboured, her canty bit throat
Some hearty auld tune would be crooning it—
The music as nat'ral and saft in the note
As when lav'rocks in heaven are soon'ing it;
And folk when they passed near her winnock were stirr'd,
And looked, though they ne'er saw the blythesome bit bird
That sang to the wheel as it whirr'd and it whirr'd—
Through sheer love o' her wark Moll was drooning it!

But waesucks on a' the puir dochters o' Eve,
The pride o' their mither still doses them!
Onie tempter that "blaws in their lug" to deceive
He easy and sune discomposes them;

And the "fruit that's forbidden" they greedily eat—
Fling innocence frae them like dirt o' their feet—
And barter their artless simplicity sweet
For a "fig," that sair metamorphoses them!

Madam Bishop she leev'd in a house wi' big stairs,
Leddy Scarlet had equal pretension o't;
Baith kept grand pianos, and put on sic *airs*
As puzzled some folks' comprehension o't;
Yet in this wicked warld it's really the case
That naething gangs farrer than carrying a "face;"
And the puirly informed whiles thocht that in lace
And ruffles the twa wared a pension o't.

But for a' they kept up sic a rippet and rack,
The better informed mair than hinted o't,
That their bellies were pinched just to cover their back,
And for "strong" meat they sadly were stinted o't.
They gied *musical* parties, however, sae fine
To a' who preferred on *piano* to dine,
And for supper o' solids have rather moonshine—
Oh, monie the blockheads here glinted at!

Noo, "fashion," for women, is simply a plague,
And they're certain to catch the infection o't;
(It's the cholera morbus—the fever and ague—
Fleeing Nancy—whate'er the direction o't,
Be't to heart, head, or heels, be't to nose, eyes, or ears—
Painted cheeks, or black "patches," or fause hair)—the "dears,"
Be they ugly or fair, be they young or in years,
Nae "doctor" can gie them protection frae't.

Honest Molly escaped sic contagion awee—
She had mair to engage her than thinking o't—
(It's idleset brings on disease, whiles, we see,
And wark gie's us wit for the jinking o't)—
But Moll's bairntime by, wi' its thick and its thrang,
And the needle and wheel, to which saftly she sang,
Nae mair in request—it was no verra lang
This fashionable fever she blinked it.

And naething wad serve her but she tae would try
Like the twa uppish leddies the thrumming o't;
And a "Collard" or "Broadwood" assuredly buy
For the pleasure o' hearing the strumming o't.

The thocht it possessed her by nicht and by day,
When she walked, when she sat, when she stood, when she lay,
Till John, in a passion, for aince in a way,
Said he wonnered what she was aye bumming at.

"It's no, woman Moll, that there's harm in the *thing*,
But it's daft-like your way o' presenting it;
For there's fitness in a' things, and surely to bring
A piano in here, instrumenting it,
Is quite out o' keeping wi' a' our douce ways—
Modest bield—mainers plain—sma' pretence—hamely claes—
A piano! My certy, 'twould fule sic a place,
And the rafters would ring clean dementing wi't.

"Grand pianos, grand houses, grand dresses, grand folk,
And grand flunkey chaps tae attending them,
May jump weel enough; but 'twould be a puir joke
For us noo to begin wi' pretending them.
Na, na, wifie Molly, I winna agree—
It would scarce stan' to reason, between you and me,
Were your gown made of drugget, your mutch filligree—
So thae haivers, come, let us be ending them.

"And to tell you the truth, the fine music they gie,
Though "grand" be the name they have christened it,
Was nocht to your ain, wi' the bairn on your knee,
When his wee soul felt lapped as he listened it;
Or that plaintive auld tune that used owre us to steal
Like a dream o' the dead whom we loved so weel,
And wha lo'ed us far mair, till we thocht we could feel
The touch o' the sainted and blest in it."

But a woman's a woman, o' that I'll be sworn,
And her head, when a plan aince gets into it,
You may coax her, command her, or put to the horn,
But some road to accomplish't she'll rin to it;
And Moll, wi' the instrument fever so fir'd,
Was na lang e'er she felt by a thocht quite inspir'd,
Sae, for her ain voice a puir proxy she hired,
And this was the way she did win to it—

A travelling chap wi' a kist o' nicknacks
Her door the neist day gently knockit at,
And quickly, unstrapping his case wi' its packs,
Each box in the case he unlocked it;

Mang the lave caught Moll's e'e a mahogany shell
That could clink seven tunes—"Noo," thinks Moll to
hersel',
"This will surely please John—it is *wee*—yet souns well"—
And the ransom at aince she unpocketed.

But even when women get whims gratified,
They aft feel a kind o' humility;
And Moll, having *got* the box, felt that her pride
Smelt rankly o' real juvenility.
So she gied the wee box to the bairns for a toy,
And Kit, her great favourite, had monie a ploy,
Amusing himsel' and his cronies forbye,
Wi' the fruit o' his mother's gentility!

THE QUILT.

A CONNUBIAL COLLOQUY

SENT TO THE MISSES BEGG, NIECES OF ROBERT BURNS, ON THE ARRIVAL OF A VERY ELABORATE AND ELEGANT BED-QUILT, MADE BY THEM, AND PRESENTED TO MY WIFE, MARCH, 1862.

Dear Ladies, the Quilt by your handicraft wrought
So superb and so snug, to my partner was brought,
Who, as soon as received, put at open defiance
All the rules and restraints of our married alliance;
For she suddenly entered my "den" without asking
Permission, just as my poor brains I was tasking,
And of an idea or two had got inkling;
In she came—the ideas flew off in a twinkling,
And have not been caught since—ideas are scary,
And, like birds once escaped, most uncommonly wary!

In my rage, papers, pens, ink, and all things were spill'd,
"Now, *what* is't?" cried I—"Oh," said she, "'tis the Quilt!"

"The Quilt, go-be-hanged," I exclaimed in a passion,
How can you, my Madam, come in in such fashion
And bother me so when I'm busy composing—
Composing, to be *dis*composed with your prosing!
Now, see what you've done! I've been hunting this hour
For a grandly pathetic and popular flower
To stick in my pages, and just when I'd got it
You enter—the whole from my memory's blotted!"

"Oh—a flower, my sweet Will, there are flowers here in plenty,
And I'll warrant they'll last you for years more than twenty!
Now do just be quiet and attend for one minute,
Till I show you my Quilt, and what wonders are in it!
First, look at this Fringe of rich Manchester Cotton—
How curious and finished—the like ne'er was shot on
A loom *I* am certain—" "Indeed, *that's* a story;
Do you know, Ma'am, your spouse is an out-and-out Tory?
He hates Manchester stuff; and its cotton, you see,
Succumb to't who will, shall ne'er get *above* Me—
So, if under this Quilt you're disposed to recline,
You in future must find your own bed, and I mine!"

"Oh, shocking, my dear, the bare thought were a scandal!
Besides, do you fancy your wife such a Vandal
As to make common use of this Quilt—of this present—
So finished and fine, and so charmingly dizzened?
Why—look at it, man! I declare 'tis like satin
As it glisters and gleams, yet the fingers when pattin'
Feel it softer than velvet, and smooth to the touch
As a full ripened peach! Troth, I doubt very much
If a Quilt half as rich be possessed far or near!
And *I* use it myself? Never, Willie, my dear!
I'll keep it to put on our *spare* bed, you know;
And when strangers go in it will make such a show!
Mrs. X, Y, or Z, or the Misses A. B.,
As they put off their bonnets, on coming to tea,
Will admire it as I do—and oh then the pleasure
Of telling them who it was furnished the treasure!
You won't grudge our loitering a bit in that case,
Nor growl at our Sex, as you've done to our face,
Saying—women do tattle so much when up-stairs,
They're surely ashamed of that gossip of theirs—
They are cleaning their nails on some poor wretch, be sure,
Or spreading some mischief—or laying some lure!
You'll know what we're talking of then at the most,

If the tea should be boiled, or if burnt be the toast!
I use it myself! Bless my heart—feel its weight—"

"Nay—stop now—for these very reasons you state
Prove quite the reverse of the point you intended,
And like most women's reasons, they need to be mended!
I cannot approve of your forethought so pawky
Of entrapping your guests into this talky-talky—
Till each takes as long to untie her own bonnet
As I'd take to a leader or scribbling a sonnet.
On my word 'tis too bad, whilst your speeches you utter
On this and on that, to spoil my bread and butter;
So, rather than tempt têtes-a-tête and delay,
I'd prefer that the Quilt be kept out of the way!
Besides, its great 'weight' proves it never was meant
To be but a piece of mere house ornament;
So thick and so cozy—so long and so wide—
It might hold a whole good rumping dozen inside;
Serve a family for sheets, blankets, covering and all,
And keep them right warm, both the old ones and small!
Our old coverlid, made of many print-patches—
Green, sky-blue, and scarlet—but gives heat by snatches!
Beneath it I've oft felt so thoroughly frozen
As on waking to doubt if I had any toes on,

And when easterly winds with one's bones play the deuce
It seems much more fitted for show than for use ;
So, I vote it be sent to the grand empty bed,
And this jolly warm Quilt be thrown o'er us instead !"

"Indeed ! Though you think we poor females are blind
It would seem 'tis yourself is not long of one mind !
But a minute ago you broke out on the fringing,
And vowed *you* would ne'er under *cotton* go cringing—
You're no Manchester convert—no—no—not an inch !
Yet now, it appears, you are fain at a pinch
Of frost or east wind to forget all your principle !
For shame, Sir ? A Whig may that way be convincible !
Or place-hunting Trimmer, but *you* I thought better
Would stick to your creed both in spirit and letter.
Oh fie ! If such high mighty 'lords of creation'
Prove so fickle, pray what is to come of the nation ?
For my part, I think that each good honest wife
Is a Tory at heart, and a Tory for life ;
Since she'd always desire certain *chambers* at least
In her *house* to be kept quite apart from the rest—
Not exactly for people to stand in and stare ;
And yet, from a pride to have such chambers there,

With all their belongings in decent array
Set aloof from the *commoner* use of each day;
Where the things chiefly prized—be they old, be they new—
Are preserved, though not hidden, most sacredly too—
Heir-looms of the past, from the Dead or the Gone,
And the gifts which the friends of To-day make our own—
Let them stand there in honour—all priceless their worth!—
And perish that sordidest system from earth
That would dare in its cold calculation to prate
Of either their value, or measure, or weight!"

"'Weight'—'weight' did you say? That truly is good—
'Twas You spoke of 'weight,' if I right understood.
But—'tis bootless to argue—so, do as you choose,
For, since you're determined, depend I won't snooze
'Neath your new Quilt. And yet—pray now, let me see—
Don't you think it, that, quietly between you and me
And the bed-post, I might just occasionally take
Some good of the Quilt? Nay—nay—don't mistake—
From so vulgar a purpose as going to *sleep*
As sure as a Christian your Quilt I will keep;
But, 'twixt *sleeping* and *waking*' there's a difference—now,
Suppose for the *latter* I use it—allow

'Twould be no *common* use? That's granted—well then,
Whenever I want to WAKE UP with my pen
(Over which, as just now, I am shockingly dull)
I'LL GET INTO THE QUILT! It may brighten my skull;
For 'twas made every stitch by the Nieces of One
Whose Genius and Wit were as bright as the sun:
Who knows but the needle of each friendly maid
May a spark of His fire to their gift have conveyed?
And if but *one* spark of the Poet were mine,
'Twere enough to make dullness itself proudly shine!"

"Nay—there you are right, and I cannot say No—
You are often so stupid, and silly, and slow!
The Seer's *mantle* fell on the shoulders of those
Who in awe and in trembling looked up as he rose—
It inspired their high purpose, which grew and still grew,
Long after the Prophet was hidden from view.
To expect like results, or pretend to maintain
The parallel here, were both impious and vain;
Yet strange are the links that mysteriously bind
Age to Age, Thought to Thought, Heart to Heart, Mind to Mind!
And faint the memorials which oftentimes speak
Like trumpets to feelings long dormant or weak!

Perhaps then this gift, as it whispers the name
Of *our* Great One, may waken congenial flame;
Make your soul fire like his 'gainst oppression and wrong,
And teach it for all the weak ones to be strong;
On the fair things around, in the earth or the sky,
To look with a brighter enkindling eye;
And for Life's changing scenes have a vision more clear—
For the happy a smile, for the wretched a tear!"

TO A YOUNG LADY,

WITH THE PRESENT OF A SCRAP-BOOK.

Accept, dear girl, the gift I send,
And with it take this simple line,
From one who was your father's friend,
And wishes peace to Thee and Thine!

Upon this volume's virgin white
Let no false hand inscribe the lie,
Which flatterers know so well to write
And maidens know too ill to fly:

No passion forced, no feigned parade,
Theatric phrasing, and bombast,
With sighs and tears to pattern made,
That last—as long as patterns last!

But here be honest words and kind,
Proceeding from the manly breast,
The lofty sentiment refined,
The noble thought, and harmless jest;

Here choicest "scraps" of grave and gay,
From authors witty, authors sage;
And here let Art its gems convey,
To ornament the varied page.

Here, too, let Friendship often leave
The traces of its genial prime,
That so the future may receive
The impress of the passing time.

For ah! too soon the hurrying hours,
With their resistless onward tread,
Shall kill its brief but brilliant flowers,
And crush its rarest blossoms dead.

Yet, casual leaflets garnered here,
And snatched from Time's remorseless wrack,
May keep their fragrance lingering near,
Or give thee all their freshness back.

The Letter, Sketch, or random Stave,
By those you once have dearly known,
From dull oblivion's grasp will save
Their memory when themselves are gone;

Will, 'mid the desert, cause to flow
Again old fountains clear and bright,
Or round descending shadows throw
The flush of young life's purple light.

Be such the uses of this Book;
And, when long years have passed away,
Upon its pages as you look,
You'll think of him who writes to-day;

You'll think of him, and many more
Far wiser, worthier ones than he;
But none a kindlier heart who bore,
My dearest girl, to Thine and Thee!

ON A YOUNG FRIEND WHO DIED AT EIGHTEEN.

Say, what shall we plant by the lowly bed
Of the loved and the loving—the early Dead?
The Cypress? `Ah, no! It can tell but the woe
And racking those poor human bosoms must know,
Whose affection, unaided and hopelessly brave,
Endeavours to pierce through the gloom of the Grave,
And across the dull river directs its lone cry,
To that shore whence a question ne'er met with reply.

Plant rather the Rose! 'Tis the emblem most fit
For the spot where our dearest to dust we commit;
The fresh life of its breath, though the leaf perisheth,
Will tell how the soul can survive amid death;
How our loving regards brook not final decay,
When the light leaves the eye and the lip turns to clay.

For the Dead are not dead, but more living than we ;
And they know, and enjoy, and they sing, and they see
What is all dark to us, till our dreamings here close,
And we wake in Hereafter—Saint, plant us the Rose !

Plant the Rose ! 'Twill remind of his sweet comely grace,
Ere disease had inscribed its wan lines on his face ;
And in language most couth—yet how short of the truth !—
Tell of charms that now flush in immortal youth ;
In that region of life and of beauty afar,
Where they need not the glory of sun, moon, or star—
Where the Day, without cloud, never sinks into Night,
And the Lamb robes His own in ineffable light !

OPINIONS.

Father Jove called a council of Gods on a time
To consider the case of us mortals,
And he vowed he would punish us all for the crime
Of bringing complaints to his portals.
Not a wretch of them all, said the God in a wrath,
Is happy, or pleased, or contented
With one single thing in the world which he hath,
But my thunder shall make them repent it.
Nay, nay, Mighty Sire, mild Apollo replied,
Don't be hasty or harsh with the minions;
With one thing at least is each man satisfied
And perfectly pleased—His Opinions.

AFTER SUNSET.

The fleetest tints that melt at eve
Have one great Orb from whence they gleam;
The faintest sounds that softly heave
One Font of Music whence they stream;
There's not a flush upon yon sky,
There's not a murmur in yon sphere,
But tells of Light beyond thine eye,
Of Harmony beyond thine ear.

There's not a smile upon the brow,
Or small heart-pulse of happiness,
But has a Source more grand, though thou,
Poor doubting one, may know it less!
That smile, though transient as the light,
That pulse, though gentle as the air,
Beams from a Love that's Infinite,
Throbs from the heart of God—is There!

Oh could we feel our pleasures so,
And know our joys as they are known,
How doubly bright would pleasure glow,
And joy how full and rich its tone!
No transient gleam, no wayward thrill,
No satiety with sorrow blent,
But one enduring bliss would fill
The soul, with Love Supreme content!

ABIIT AD PLURES.

Sublimely strong—that ancient Faith;
Though not as bright or calm or clear;
Which, thus, beside a brother's bier,
Could wrest the very dart from death!

And can I, friend of mine, but choose
Upon thy recent tomb to write,
Who readst them by the higher light,
The words of thy loved Roman Muse?

Gone to the Many! Yes, thou art;
The many good, and just, and true.
The wise to plan, the brave to do,
Who never die, though they depart!

Gone to the Many! Wherefore so?
Because this world is too confined
To hold the measures of the mind:—
Do lordly oaks in potsherds grow?

GONE TO THE MANY! Whither then?
Where knowledge is no partial gain,
And thought no phantom of the brain,
But all is full and fixed to men!

GONE TO THE MANY! Here no more
Shall friendly counsels from thee come;
Thine eyes are dim, thy lips are dumb,
Thy books are closed, and sealed thy lore!

GONE TO THE MANY! Round thy tomb
What days of faded summers meet
With all their recollections sweet;
Forgotten things their light resume!

GONE TO THE MANY! Why should we
In vain lamenting mourn the past?
We, too, shall get release at last;
Then FAREWELL! till we come to thee.

GONE TO THE MANY! Not the wail
Of pallid doubt, or drear despair!
The old Familiar Ones are there;
And THERE they wait to bid us HAIL!

THE GOURD.

Oh! the heart of the Prophet of God it was glad,
When the Gourd with its branches o'ermantled his head;
But the heart of the Prophet of God it was sad
When the Gourd with its branches lay withered and dead.

'Twas a worm in the Gourd which the Lord had allowed,
To grow with its growth and its beauty to blight;
For he willed that the Prophet, rebellious and proud,
Should a lesson be taught by that plant of a night.

Ah! how many there be, like that Prophet of old,
On the things of a day who will centre their trust;
And the moral of wisdom will never be told,
Till the gourd of their hopes is laid low in the dust.

Did the pleasures which yesterday's promise revealed,
When to-day we possessed them, that promise fulfil?
Was there no canker-worm in the flow'ret concealed,
Or no "wind from the east" the frail blossoms to kill?

Have the friends on whose faith all our happiness leant,
In whose ear all our wants, all our sorrows were pour'd,
Has their kindness ne'er changed, but unbroken, unbent,
Have we still to rejoice in the shade of our Gourd?

No; pleasures and friendship, alas! they have been;
It is only their wreck we are able to tell—
The few shrivelled leaves of a tree once too green,
In a night it sprung up, on the morrow it fell.

Sad emblem of all which engages us here!
While others above thee despairingly grieve,
May Faith calm my tumult, may God bless my tear,
And point me where hopes can no longer deceive.

DEATH IN THE MANSE.

'Tis weary im our parlour now,
'Tis weary out and in;
I miss the light of George's brow,
I miss his merry din;
I miss him by his mother's chair;
When others gather round
For evening hymn, or morning prayer,
No Georgie there is found.

His cap where last he laid it lies,
His toys and picture-book;
They bring the salt tears to my eyes,
Yet still I look, and look.
The wild-flowers that he used to tend
Grow listless by the burn,
As if they knew their little friend
Can never more return.

The feathered favourites that he fed,
The robin and the wren,
Have sought out Georgie's little bed,
And there they sing again.
They sing beside the little mound
So near our garden gate,
In that still spot of hallowed ground,
Where all meet soon or late.

Ah, childish death, ah, childish love,
How cruel is your spell!
But no: Faith, Hope, divine reprove—
Then why, my heart, rebel?
George is not dead; he only sleeps,
A primrose on his breast,
A holy star its vigil keeps
O'er his unbroken rest.

Though woods may wave and gowans spring,
And still he slumber so;
Though streamlets run, and birds may sing,
As seasons come and go;

Though hearts beat painful, in the hush
That makes our house so dumb,
As wayward feelings through them rush,
Or doubts across them come—

He'll wake! As sure as each bright day
Succeeds each nightly gloom;
As sure as every flowery May
Starts from its wintry tomb;
He'll wake to chase away our tears
Where sorrow needs no ruth;
Where childhood wears the strength of years,
And age perpetual youth.

THE REMONSTRANCE O' WELLINGTON SQUARE, IN AYR.

Tak pity on me, men o' Ayr!
Tak pity on your only Square,
In simmer bald, in winter bare,
Whiles fried, whiles frozen,
To polar gust and tropic glare
My breast exposin'!

Nae dainty gowans near me seen;
Nae shrubs, wi' saft refreshing green,
And clumps o' violets between,
My bleakness cover,
But driving san'-drifts blin' my een
A' seasons over!

The "Barns" owre there, in leafy pride,
My sterile nakedness deride,
And "Alloway Place," close by my side,
Joins wi' the scorner;
I wish I could rin aff and hide
In some by-corner!

Twenty guid houses, clean and bonny,
Stan' wi' disdain, and glowre upon me;
And there the Jail, my neebor cronie,
Looms wi' black froun,
And says I'm a disgrace to onie
Weel-ordered toun!

The Cannon, tae, wi' muckle mou,*
Girns till it gars my vitals grue,
And then the Statue knits its broo
And turns its back;
I canna thole the surly crew,
Their scowls and clack.

* Since removed to make room for the Eglinton Statue.

The toun o' Burns ! Its dounricht canting
To talk o' Him, and lea me wanting
The bonnie buskit bit o' planting
He took delight in !
Would he were here ! He'd sune be taunting,
And on you flyting.

He sang o' woods, he sang o' flowers,
O' birken shaws, and rosy bowers ;
And whaur the Bruar water pours
A poem screeded,
To get its ragged rocky course
Wi' trees weel-cleeded.

But Me ! There's no a beggar's babby
Ae half as starved-like, or as scabby ;
Or actor-body puir and shabby
Wi' seedy coat on ;
Guid faith, it's plain that honest Rabbie
In Ayr's forgotten.

Oh would you but aboot me cast
A strong fir-belt to fen' the blast
That gathers in the wild Sou'-wast,
How sune 'twad rise,
And mak me wear a smile richt fast
O' Paradise!

What braw thick bushes I would rear,
Wi' branches spreading there and here,
Whaur nestling birdies a' the year
Micht hap and whussel—
The Blackie, wi' his note sae clear,
Lintie and Throssel!

Whaur Wrens and Robins, blythe and free
Blue Bonnets, Shelfas, merrily,
Micht preen their feathers ere they flee,
And fill their gebbies,
And in the midst a fountain see
To cule their nebbies!

Laburnums, wi' their gowden braidin',
And Lilacs, wi' their modest shadin',
Micht grow in June ; and Rowens laden
Wi' coral berries,
In Autumn, when the leaves are fadin',
At spruce "Barns Terrace."

The sodger-form o' glorious Neill
Would look a hunner times as weel
Did laurels up ahint it speel,
The e'e relieving ;
And no, as noo, gaunt, grim, atweel,
To taste sair grieving.

And when beside it stan's the shape
O' Him whose death made thousands weep,
And put twa kingdoms into crape—
Earl Eglintoun—
Sure evergreens were best to drape
His statue roun.

In ilka sunny simmer morn,
How sweet their fragrance would be borne;
In ilka wintry day forlorn
The gloom they'd brichten;
Pleased wi' their beauty, even the storm
Would lift and lichten!

Oh, wad ye, men o' Ayr, tak pity,
There's no a toun, or even a city,
Need boast a Square mair trig and pretty
In a' the nation,
Or worthier of a rhymer's ditty
And admiration!

ST. MARY'S BAZAAR, DUMFRIES.

[A PROLOGUE, SUPPOSED TO BE SPOKEN BY A FAIR STALL-KEEPER.]

Come all ye pretty maidens, young bachelors alsò,
Come ladies of a "certain age," come every ancient *beau*,
Come wedded folks, come widowed folks, and children in a row,
Till I rehearse the rarities of this most wondrous Show!

There's something here for every one—the grown-up and the small—
The single and the double too—the little and the tall—
The lean and stout—the grave and gay—I'll fit them at my stall;
Oh, such bargains ne'er were seen before in our Assembly Hall.

Here Pattens for wee Baby's feet to keep it snug and warm,
And wool-knit Wrappers that defy the north-wind and all harm;

And Bibs, and Hoods, and Pinafores, and little Frocks in swarm,
And thick long Gaiters for its legs, and Gauntlets for the arm!

We've fine-dressed Dolls for girls here; and Jumping-Jacks that poise
Their limbs in every posture that can charm the heart of boys;
We've China-men, and Negro-men, and gallant bold Rob Roys,
And Puzzles and Dissected Maps for those too old for toys.

We've Conversation Cards will keep the table in a roar—
Such funny questions they do ask! aye, and we have much more,
Some Spaewives that will tell you true the mates for you in store,
And whether you'll wed in your teens, or wait till twenty-four.

Are you in love, my nice young Miss, and sorely vexed, my dear,
That *Some One's* Slippers are not done you've had in hand a year—
And that fine Smoking-Cap? alas! But, come now, never fear,
He'll ne'er find out if you should buy a Cap and Slippers here!

See what a handy thing is this—a case to hold Cigars!
And Pellet-Boxes for his breath when smoke its sweetness mars!
Rosettes, Love-knots, and Mottoes too, Book-marks and *Prenez-gards*,
Pen-wipers, Purses, Port-monnaies—the pride of all Bazaars!

You, modest youth, at such a loss to know what you should send
At this blythe Christmas-tide to—ah, I understand—a "friend"—
Look here, a Work-Box, I declare, and usefuls without end!
Whene'er *She* knits or hems—ahem—she'll think of *You*, depend!

We've Needle-books, Pin-cushions too, and Patterns for
the frame—
(Here's Isaac looking for Rebec.—Your case, Sir's, much
the same),
And Mauchline tartan *souvenirs* of every clannish name,
And Music-sheets with words will set her heart in mutual
flame!

There Perfumes for the toilet here, and mats to set them
on—
Millefleurs, Rosemary, Lavender, Pachouli quite the *ton*—
Head ornaments which her fair brow will *so* become—
you'll own—
And every thing but Crinolines—for these are *never* shown!

We've Cravats too of every sort, of every flower and shade,
Embroidered by neat fingers, and so curiously inlaid—
Rejected lovers with their necks in such attire array'd
Can still pretend to being *noosed* by some devoted maid!

Yet if, young man, you'd be advis'd, I'll kindly you exhort—
To have a friend at *courting* is as needful as at Court;
"Mamma" can say a word or two may cut your troubles short—
If some attention's paid to *her* you'll be the better for't!

Now there's a Cushion will just suit her couch or ottomàn,
When ladies in the drawing-room are holding their divan,
As gentlemen discuss their wine, and they discuss *mag. scan.*,
But—whisht! to tell what ladies talk is no part of my plan!

This "Cozie" for her tea-pot, Sir, it looks so very nice!
That Fire-Screen—how magnificent its Bird of Paradise!
A Basket-cloth to hold the cake on Christmas-day she'll slice—
And Doylies, Table-napkins too—you'll ne'er rue my advice!

And, if you're wishing just to make assurance doubly sure,
Pray don't forget "Papa;" you know "Papa" you should
secure
With some small present—something just to testify to
your
Remembrance, goodwill, and respect—He'll ne'er detect
the lure!

This handsome Ink-stand, or that Desk, or yon fine Vol-
umes may
Do, or a Paper-cutter, or a Collar for poor "Tray,"
(Since "like me like my dog," you know's a proverb to
this day,
And folks are mostly safe who mind what such old proverbs
say).

But stop! perhaps—I may be wrong—there is a maiden
Aunt!
Well, I declare this Prudence-Cap's the very thing *she'll*
want,
Or Muffetees, or Muffler, or Shawl, so fine, you'll grant,
Or Cocoa, Tablet, and Jujubes to cure asthmatic pant.

But many, maybe, would prefer the "hazard of the die?"
If so, I've tickets here to sell for Raffles by-and-by;
A dip into this "Lucky-bag" perhaps you'd like to try?
Sixpence a chance!—you'll get such *lots*—it is a *Lot*-ter-y.

There Buns, and Cakes, and Comfits rich, and Lemonade, and Tart,
Puffs, Patès, Cookies, Christmas Pies, and Soups *a la Mivart*,
And since even belles are hungry whiles, a sure way to their heart
May be just by their mouth—You see—Nay, wherefore, Sir, thus start?

'Tis far more shocking, sure, to starve in sight of things to eat;
Romance, with nothing to't, indeed is very sorry meat!
Besides, "Refreshment's" needed much after this crowd and heat—
The "Room's" at hand—step in—and mind that "sweets are for the sweet."

And when Amanda's had her lunch, ere you politely pop
The question—"are you going home?" pray don't forget
the "Shop"
Called "Curiosity;"* and yet this hint I scarce need
drop—
Amanda's *curiosity*, no doubt, will make you stop!

.

But I must end my Catalogue, lest it prevent my sale—
From too long lists it might confuse you purchasers to
wale;
So, come, do buy, and help me with my very heavy tale
Of sums to make, and Debt to clear—
(A penurious old gentleman here asks
his "change" back out of a "Three-
penny bit")
what!—"change!"—you
make me pale!

* It should be explained that this stanza referred to a room in the Bazaar which was fitted up and filled with antiquities of all descriptions—autographs, rare MSS., and volumes, pictures, old armour, &c., &c., by my very excellent friend, that industrious collector, Mr. David Dunbar, of Dumfries Academy, who is also a most worthy elder in St. Mary's.

I never deal in "coppers," Sir! and fractional white "bits"
I merely take them to oblige—they're paltry coin for cits.;
A shilling, florin, half-crown, crown, or pound my book best fits,
(And as much more as people please)—think I have lost my wits?

Oh, no! I may be new enough to selling out such ware;
But "change" and charity—how odd! it really makes one stare!
You drop a sovereign in the "plate"—do you get "change" back there?
And where's the difference, let me ask, at this Kirk Fancy Fair?

(Old gentleman retires more confounded than convinced.)

(Stall-keeper Aside—*Laughing to herself, and counting an immense heap of money.—*)

They talk about the Volunteers—and in their praise
enlarge—
And how they use their Rifles, and how they hit the
Targe ;
I'm a St. Mary's Volunteer—and though I'm no Laffarge
To murder, still I *rifle* well, and beat them at a *charge !*

DUMFRIES, *December, 1863.*

'TIS A BEAUTIFUL WORLD.

'Tis a Beautiful World! Whatever the time
We look upon Nature—in sunshine or shade,
In storm or in calm, in the Winter or Prime,
Or when Summer flowers flush, or when Autumn leaves fade.
The eye that delights o'er the landscape to range,
Or scan the bright glories that sparkle on high,
May own to fatigue as they endlessly change;
Yet still it is Beauty, in Earth, Sea, or Sky!

There is Beauty in Life! Where the lowly ones dwell,
Or the great ones have planted the parterre or hall;
Where the young their fond longings so gleefully tell,
And the old their past pleasures as pensive recal.
In Joy's loudest music, in Grief's deepest wail,
Or Love whose strange medley of both is combined—
In Life's every scene, every season, and tale,
Some snatches of beauty you surely shall find.

Yet, o'er Nature as Life, there be breasts that unfold
No rapturous thought, no sensation of bliss,
And eyes that look stony, and tearless, and cold
On a scene so resplendent, so lovely as this.
And why? 'Tis not Nature and Life are to blame;
Their wonderful issues for ever they roll;
To the blindly insensate the sights are the same—
'Tis the lookers who want but the Beautiful Soul.

Then, Fortune, take all of thy favours away—
How little, at best, of true joy they impart!—
But Heaven, preserve us, we earnestly pray,
The clear thoughtful spirit, the warm loving heart!
Oh what wealth in such treasures! Nay, feeble the word;
For wealth may be squandered, and treasures run waste,
But these, while we spend them the most, most we hoard;
And the more that we scatter, the longer they last!

TO A FRIEND,

ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER, WHOM SHE HAD NOT SEEN FOR FIFTY YEARS.

Life dawns! Two little girls at play,
Like bees from flower to flower,
Dance childhood's happy morn away,
Nor dream that change can lower;
But, as the sun through cloud and mist
Will travel up the sky,
Life grows! and these two girls have kissed
Their last, and said—Good-bye!

Good-bye! Yet still young hope is strong:
They part—yet, wherefore shed
Sad tears? They part to meet ere long,
New honours round their head!

It is not so: they never meet;
Years as they come and go,
In prospect long, in passage fleet,
No after-union know.
Their children gambol as did they,
With reckless romp and glee,
But the two little girls at play
No more each other see!

Grave cares, grey hairs come on apace,
And failing vigour too,
But ne'er one sisterly embrace
Of hearts so warm and true!
And fifty years are gone; and one
From earth has passed away;
The other sees life's westering sun
Set on her sister's clay!

Dear Friend! That sister for whom tears
Of old affection flow,
Than thro' those long, long fifty years
Is nearer to you now!

So, weep no more, nor mourn her loss,
  She does not weep, be sure ;
Life has for her no heavy cross,
  And sorrow needs no cure.

But back to that old happy time,
  When thought and love were new,
When earth looked fair and in its prime
  To Her,—the dead—and You ;
That sister of your soul has fled ;
  And there she waits the while,
Her visage radiantly o'erspread
  With childhood's blessed smile.

TIME'S CHANGES.

Here to-day, and gone to-morrow—
Meeting, greeting, then farewell;—
Joy alternating with sorrow—
Birth-day hymn and funeral knell—
Rainbow tints on showers descending—
Laughter bursting into tears—
Hopes in disappointment ending—
Such the sum of Human Years.

Restless ocean, rolling river—
Shifting cloudland, fitful dream—
Passing meteor—onward ever
Coming gloom and coming gleam,—
Uphill toil that knows no resting,
Ne'er a breathing 'mid the strife
Of a battle loud and wasting—
Such and so is Human Life.

Mighty Power, on high who movest
Guiding and controlling all,
Surely human things thou lovest
Who canst mark a sparrow's fall.
If this Life comprise our being,
Earth the only hope allowed,
Save us, save this sorrow-dreeing,
Send us silence, send the shroud!

If, beyond the mocking Present,
Stretch another, nobler sphere,
Whose events less evanescent
Die not, as they perish here.
Then, amidst those transient losses,
Hopes so shifting and unsure,
Gains and pleasures, pains and crosses,
Teach us, Father, to endure!

From yon loom's most tangled tissue—
Brittlest threads of light and shade—
Finished shapes of beauty issue,
In the gorgeous fabric laid;

So, the slenderest chance that flieth
'Thwart the web of Human Fate,
From the hand Divine which plieth,
Hath its uses, soon or late.

Out of all those fleeting blisses,
Out of all those griefs as fleet,
Not a thread its purpose misses,
None, but yet its end shall meet;
Till a texture, swift-evolving,
Fit for regal men to wear,
All this chequered change resolving,
Shall endue our Being There!

How, when all Time's action over,
Bursts that Future on our eyes,
'Twill amaze us to discover
Harshest contrasts harmonize;
And those smiles and tears heart-rending,
Fits and fervours interwove,
In one scheme of wisdom blending,
Showing one design of Love!

YOUTH.

Oh, give me back the freshness
  Of those early days again !
When the blood went bounding joyously
  And free through every vein ;
While the throbbing heart beat unison
  In wonder, hope, or fear ;
And 'twas all so Real within me,
  In the Morning of the Year !

When the strings of life would vibrate
  To the faintest breath around ;
And every touch was musical
  With something more than sound ;
As Joy glowed into a rapture,
  And Grief melted in a tear ;
And 'twas all so Real within me
  In that Morning of the Year !

How the buds then burst in beauty!
  How the trees wore living green!
And everything was animate
  And vocal in the scene;
While Echo, gathering all their speech,
  Would pour it in my ear;
And 'twas all so Real around me
  In the morning of the year!

Ah, Friendship then was friendship,
  More fast than lover's knot;
And a quarrel—when I quarrelled,
  Why, I fought it on the spot!
For I loved with whole affection,
  And I hated as sincere;
And 'twas all so Real within me
  In the Morning of the Year:

My wise Self of to-day
  As he travels back to School,
Recalling boyish fervours,
  Thinks that other self a fool;

But, between the Selves, I'm certain,
Which may justly point the sneer,
It at least was Real within me
In the Morning of the Year!

How firmly then I trusted!
I then believed, indeed;
No halving of my confidence,
No halting in my creed:
Faith, like a second Sight, to me
Brought everything so near;
And 'twas all so Real within me
In the Morning of the Year!

The sated palate seeks again
The old and simple fare—
The cup of milk, the crust of bread;
But where, oh, tell me where
Can the sated spirit of a man
Regain the wholesome cheer,
Which was the life of life to him
In the Morning of the Year?

A little child was set, by One
Who spake Divinely Great—
"Behold," said He, "'tis such as these
Shall reach yon heavenly gate!"
What marvel if the hollow crowd
Refused the Word to hear?
Alas, the Real was gone for them
With the Morning of their Year!

Youth's golden bowl is broken,
Its fountain hath run dry;
Vain for its pearly waters now
The jaded heart may sigh;
But, oh, to quaff that other font
Whose living crystal clear,
Shall make the Real be all so Real
Through the Eternal Year!

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